VIII

ANNUAL REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE

Year 1878.

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REPORT ON LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM FOR THE YEAR 1878.

INTRODUCTION.

In submitting the Immigration Report for the present year, some alterations have been made in its form for the sake of convenience of perusal.

A chapter has been introduced at the beginning of the report in which all new and special administrative action of sufficient importance to deserve notice is shortly reviewed. The chapter on the statistics of immigration has also been re-modelled, so as to treat more systematically the several questions which these statistics raise. The chapter of general remarks has been somewhat extended in regard to the questions it embraces, while in the chapter on district details only such variations from the general statements which have previously been made for the whole Province as are specially deserving of attention are related. The order adopted, as far as possible, has been under each heading, to deal first with subjects connected with the journey and importation of the labourer, and then with his residence in the Province.

CHAPTER I.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION.

SECTION I.—IMPORTATION AND JOURNEY TO DESTINATION.

Recruitment by garden sirdars

Some questions of importance concerning the recruitment of labourers under Act VII. came under the Chief Commissioner's consideration during the year on reference from the Government of Bengal. The Chief Commissioner's opinion was desired on the subject of certain suggestions made by some Calcutta agents to abolish recruitment by contractors altogether, and to license only garden-sirdars. Sir Steuart Bayley, after consulting the district officers and leading planters of the Province, came to the conclusion that it would not be advisable to forbid recruiting by contractors, as, if this were done, it would prove extremely difficult for newly-started gardens, which, of course, could not provide sirdars at the outset, to obtain coolies at all. He proposed, however, that the limit of the period for which a garden-sirdar's license could be granted might with advantage be extended from six to nine months, and that the number of coolies to be recruited by this agency should be raised from 20 to 50.

Free immigration.

2. Inquiries were also instituted, at the suggestion of the Bengal Government, on the subject of free immigration into this Province. The question arose from the practice, which was found to have grown up, of garden-sirdars and recruiters taking with them coolies who were not under any contract, in company with their coolies who were under contract. The results of the inquiries into the extent of this free immigration will be noticed elsewhere. But, in regard to the practice referred to, the Chief Commissioner, after full consideration, has expressed the opinion, with which the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal concurs, that it is not illegal for return coolies who are not certificated, nor for any other unlicensed persons, to take with them to Assam immigrants, not under contract at all, or only under ordinary contracts for one year. While recognising certain disadvantages which might arise out of the development of this system, the Chief Commissioner considers it is a form of free immigration which he would be most unwilling to discourage, and would certainly not prevent by legislative enactment. The great advantages which the system affords to the tea-planter in supplying a willing labourer make it desirable that the latitude which the law now allows to free immigration should not be restricted.

Female recruiters

3. Another question raised was whether women should be given recruiting licenses as garden-sirdars. The practice was found to have long been in vogue in Cachar, and to some extent in Sylhet and Sibságar also, but not apparently in other districts, to give such licenses to the wives of garden-

sirdars when accompanying their husbands on a recruiting mission, with the object of obtaining a greater number of female immigrants, whose influence in rendering the labourers in the gardens more settled and contented was found most beneficial. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, however, was of opinion that the practice was not contemplated by the law, and the Chief Commissioner (Colonel Keatinge) accordingly directed its discontinuance, though he personally saw little objection to the practice as long as the women-recruiters accompanied their husbands.

Unsuitable coolies.

4. Complaints continue to be received, principally from Upper Assam, that many weakly and emaciated coolies are imported who are unfit for labour. The complaints, however, have been general in their nature, and have not generally been accompanied by such detailed information as would permit of inquiry into the circumstances of their importation.

In regard to garden-sirdar-recruited coolies, the remedy lies in the hands of the employer, who can refuse to pay any reward to the recruiter unless a proper class of immigrant is imported. But, as to immigrants recruited by contractors, the employer can personally do nothing. If, however, the agents of the employer in Calcutta, who engage and despatch the contractors' coolies, exercised greater care in the selection of strong and able-bodied recruits, the evil would disappear. It is no doubt true that the Inspector of Immigrants could be directed to reject a larger proportion of the immigrants. But when the agent is anxious to despatch a recruit, and considers him likely to be a serviceable labourer, it is doubtful how far the Inspector should go in rejecting the recruit so long as he is not physically unfit to emigrate. The blame, if there be any, certainly rests with the agent who brings weakly coolies to the Inspector, for, while the latter can only reject absolutely unfit labourers, it is the business of the former to select fit men.

The subject is still under inquiry, but it is significant that the complaints come almost exclusively from Upper Assam, the most distant districts of the Province, for which it is, it may be presumed, most difficult to obtain recruits, and where the risk of deterioration on the voyage is largest. A more rigid rejection of weakly coolies might perhaps be enforced with advantage, but the cost of each labourer would then certainly rise considerably.

Improvements on the steamer passage

5. The subject of improving the steamer journey from Goalundo and Dhubri has been continuously before the Chief Commissioner, and he has been in constant correspondence in the matter with the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, with whom rests the direct control of the steamers in matters connected with the transport of immigrants.

The question of providing an accelerated steam service which was originally brought before the Government of India in 1874, and has since been frequently urged by the Secretary of State, was also the subject of much correspondence between the Government of India and the Chief Commissioner. On the failure of any acceptable tenders, Sir Steuart Bayley proposed that such a service be started by direct Government agency in communication with the Northern Bengal State Railway. The proposal is still before the Government of India, but it is improbable that during the existing financial pressure any provision can be made for what is nevertheless the great desideratum of the Province.

Diet.

6. In the latter part of the year the question of altering the scale of the diet of immigrants when on board, which was supposed to be unsuitable, was considered, and a new dietary was issued by the Government of Bengal early in the year 1879. The full effect of the change has yet to be seen.

Water-supply

7. A more important point, the improvement of the water-supply on board the steamers, was also very carefully considered. It was found that, under the existing arrangements, fairly good water was supplied for drinking purposes, but that the arrangements for supplying bathing-water were defective. The inveterate practice of coolies, and, indeed, of nearly all classes of natives, is to put some of the water in which they bathe into the mouth, and it was thought highly probable that water polluted by coolies infected with cholera might thus be the means of spreading cholera among the immigrants on board. The Deputy-Surgeon-General of the Dacca Circle represented these views at considerable length in his Sanitary Report for 1878, and orders have since issued by the Government of Bengal, by which it is hoped that it will no longer be possible for one coolie to use water polluted by another coolie, even for the purposes of bathing. It is hoped that these two measures may do much to improve the health of immigrants on board the steamers.

Deck space

8. Another point which was discussed during the year was the amount of deck space to be allowed to the coolies on board the steamers. It had been the custom to set aside a space for the passage of the crew, and to exclude such space in the measurement of the carrying capacity of the

steamer. But it was represented that it was found, in practice, neither possible nor necessary to keep open such a passage, and the Bengal Government accordingly permitted this space to be used for the accommodation of the coolies. The question of further diminution of the deck space allowed for each coolie is still under consideration.

Quarantine detention.

9. An important question, which has been frequently before the Chief Commissioner, is the detention of immigrants at the landing-depôt in case of cholera infection. The present rules are to detain only such immigrants as are actually suffering from cholera when landed, or who are attacked before leaving the depôt. The rest of the immigrants, though of the same batch, and though they may be landed from a steamer on which there has been cholera, are not detained more than one, or, at most, two days; but the officer in charge of the depôt gives a certificate for the information of the manager of the garden, stating whether the batch of immigrants have been amongst coolies affected with cholera or other infectious diseases. These precautions are, of course, obviously insufficient in themselves to secure that a new batch of immigrants may not carry cholera into a garden. But to detain the coolies a long time at a river-side depôt seems open to still greater objections. It would entail much additional expense in maintaining the coolies; the accommodation, appliances, and attendance would be necessarily inadequate; and the result might frequently be the spread of the infection it was desired to avoid. On the whole, the Chief Commissioner, after consulting the Deputy-Surgeon-General, has not found it desirable to make any alterations in the present rules. The only remedy the Chief Commissioner considers is to be found in the careful segregation of the new arrivals in the garden until all danger of infection be past,—a practice, indeed, which is already adopted by all prudent managers.

Overland route to Dhubri

10. The overland immigration route to Dhubri continues to be largely adopted, but the returns exhibiting the results of this part of the journey are still necessarily rather defective. Suitable arrangements have been made by the Government of Bengal for the proper supervision and accommodation of immigrants adopting this route to Dhubri, whether proceeding by rail from Calcutta to Rangpur or marching through Dinagepore. The Chief Commissioner is, however, disposed strongly to advocate the general adoption of the railway route from Rajmehal *viâ* Hooghly (avoiding the town of Calcutta) and so by the Northern Bengal State Railway to Kawnea, the present terminus between Rangpur and Dhubri, in preference to the marching route by land from Rajmehal to Dhubri. The cost in each case is much the same, but the saving in time is large, and the risks of loss on the journey by sickness or desertion are reduced to a minimum.

Pending completion of the remaining links of communication between the terminus of the Northern Bengal State Railway and Dhubri, Goalundo remains the principal embarkation depôt.

Depôts at Dhubri.

11. The depôts at Dhubri have shown a very fair standard of health during the year, but measures for their further improvement are in contemplation, from which good results are expected. In consequence of the increase in the number of immigrants who march up the Trunk Road from Dhubri to Upper Assam, the Chief Commissioner has in contemplation the introduction of special arrangements for the proper supervision and care of labourers using this route. Inquiries have already been ordered with this view.

Inspection of immigrants to Sylhet.

12. In the Surmá Valley, the only change calling for particular notice arises from the opening of two sub-divisions in the south of the district of Sylhet, where the tea-gardens are chiefly situated. Immigrants on their way to their gardens are now examined at these sub-divisions, and the necessity of a long detour to the head-quarter station is thus avoided.

SECTION II.— RESIDENCE IN THE PROVINCE.

Mortality among Madras immigrants.

In consequence of the excessive mortality in 1877 among Madras immigrants, the Chief Commissioner, under the powers conferred upon him by Section 2 of Regulation IV. of 1877, on the 8th April, 1878, extended the provisions of Chapter 13 of Act VII. of 1873 (B.C.) to all labourers imported into Assam from the Madras Presidency.

It appeared, however, from the special inquiries instituted that the mortality among Madrasis in 1877 was quite exceptional, and was due not to special unhealthiness in the gardens on which they resided (for the general health of these gardens was not found exceptionally bad), but to the introduction in large numbers during the year 1877 of

labourers who had become weakened by scarcity during the late famine in the Madras Presidency. It is satisfactorily established that coolies from Madras of ordinary physique and in ordinary health can withstand the climate of Assam just as well as coolies from other parts of India. The mortality of Madras coolies previous to 1877 was not exceptionally high, but in some districts was even exceptionally low. Thus, in Sibságar, with a death-rate of 6·04 and 6·67 among all other classes of coolies in 1875 and 1876, the death-rate for Madrasi non-Act coolies, that is, coolies resident over 3 years, was 3·47 and 3·37 respectively. The general testimony of tea-planters points to the same conclusion, that Madras coolies are not, as a rule, at all unsuited to Assam. Very high testimony to their efficiency as labourers, and their ability to withstand the climate is borne by men of experience in this Province.

2. Under these circumstances, and looking to the fact that the importations were rapidly diminishing (they were only 189 for the whole Province in 1878), the Chief Commissioner did not see occasion to employ the powers he possessed to close gardens to the importation of this class of coolies, and to release all such coolies from their contracts. To release the coolies already imported from their contracts would have thrown upon Government the task of supporting them, without in any way insuring any improvement in their health. For, though it is possible that removal to another climate might have resulted in improved health, it was also extremely doubtful whether this would be the case. On the other hand, unless Government undertook so to remove them, it was clear that three months' wages, which is all they were entitled to receive from their employers on release from contract, would be quite insufficient to enable them to return to their own country, even if their health had permitted such a course. Merely to order the release of these coolies would therefore have been to render their position worse, for they would have been unable to support themselves by their labour, and would have no longer been supported by their employers, to whom they were bound by contract. This difficulty is prominently pointed out by the Inspector of Immigrants for Upper Assam, and was noticed in last year's Immigration Report, and commented on in the Resolution of the Government of India reviewing that report. It is to be observed that on hardly any garden where the mortality was severe last year has there been severe mortality during the present year.

3. The general conclusion to be drawn from the inquiries into the terrible mortality of Madrasi coolies in 1877 is confirmed by the facts disclosed this year in regard to North-Western coolies. It is clear that the authorities charged with the supervision of emigration should be especially watchful in the case of coolies coming from districts afflicted with scarcity, and should not permit any but those in really sound health to emigrate to Assam. It is mistaken philanthropy to allow the emaciated and weak to leave their homes for this Province. Beyond putting forward this general caution, the Chief Commissioner is not prepared to advocate the total prohibition of the importation of labourers from any part of India into this Province, though particular gardens may have to be closed to particular classes of labourers.

Labour returns.

4. A most important question, which has formed the subject of separate correspondence with the Government of India within the year, is the improvement of the returns now furnished by employers of labour. The insufficiency, and, at the same time, the apparently needless complexity of the present returns were observed by the Government of India in their No. 100, of 4th July, 1878, and a suggestion was offered that a nominal-roll containing the necessary details of information might be furnished by employers, and that the required returns should be compiled by Government from this information. The Chief Commissioner has given the subject his most careful attention, and has consulted a large number of the leading employers and the Inspectors of Labourers and District Officers. His opinion is recorded at length in this office letter No. 2,574, of 23rd July, 1879, to India, Home Department. Briefly, he is of opinion that, as the planters have become accustomed to the present forms, complex as they may be, it would be inadvisable to introduce any change, unless the relief to be derived from it were great and obvious. There are, moreover, strong reasons to doubt whether the present forms, if the minute details of statistics now required are still to be supplied, are capable of any material simplification; and it seems at the same time far from certain whether the submission of a nominal-roll, as proposed, would be practically found to give much less trouble to the employer than the present returns. However, Sir Steuart Bayley has determined to make an experiment of the proposed system with some employers who may be willing to give it a fair trial, and will report the results.

Defects of present labour law.

5. In dealing with this question, the Chief Commissioner has brought to the notice of the Government of India the necessary imperfection of the labour returns at present required by law, inasmuch as returns cannot be exacted from gardens employing only labourers not on contracts

under Act VII. He also pointed out the anomaly in this state of the law, and of the unfairness to the labourer not under Act VII., who is left without protection, in view to which such returns are necessary, although his engagements are enforced by penal provisions under Act XIII. of 1859.

6. The Chief Commissioner would here notice the misleading character of the percentages shown in the returns calculated on both the "actual" and "average" strength. The "actual" strength, both in the case of Act-VII. and non-Act coolies is arrived at in accordance with the instructions contained in paragraph 6 of Resolution by the Government of India, No. 59-60, of 19th March, 1878, by adding to the strength shown at the beginning of the year all the additions to the roll during the year from whatever source, except those derived from transfers from other gardens.

Calculations on "actual" strength.

The figure thus obtained shows, it is true, in the case of each garden, the aggregate number of coolies who have been employed there at any time during the year; but it is of course largely in excess of the number who have ever been employed there together at any one time. The degree of error rises with the number of the intermediate additions and deductions, and is further intensified if the additions are made towards the close of the period for which the calculation is made. If there have been numerous losses, and those losses have been mostly made up towards the end of the year, the figure of "actual" strength thus calculated would rise largely, and the percentage rate of loss calculated on this figure would consequently fall, and would diverge the more widely from the truth. For instance, if the strength of coolies on a garden at the commencement of the year was 100, and, having lost by death and desertion 50 out of this number during the year, these losses were made up by importations during November and December of 50 new coolies, the "actual" strength would be recorded as 150, and the rate of loss 33 per cent., whereas the real loss has been close upon 50 per cent.

As a matter of fact, however, the statistics of importation in 1877-78 show that 74 per cent. of the total immigrants were imported in the first half of the calendar year from 1st January to 30th June, so the most important cause of error in the calculation of "actual strength" for Act-VII. coolies does not practically operate very strongly.

This, indeed, is one of the principal arguments in favour of retaining the present period for the returns, the calendar instead of the official year, as, the principal importations being in the first part of the year, the percentage rates of losses approximate more closely to reality.

In the abovementioned respects the figure of "actual strength" is liable to mislead, but the percentage rates of mortality and desertion calculated on this figure involve still further fallacies. For, in estimating either of these rates, no account is taken of the other causes of deduction, which may have meanwhile reduced the number of those exposed to the particular risk under calculation.

Thus, if, in the instance above given, 10 out of the 50 total losses were due to deaths, while the remaining 40 had previously been struck off the roll by desertion, determination of contract, and other causes, the death-rate on "actual" strength would still be calculated as 10 on 150, or 6 6 per cent, whereas the true death-rate has clearly been 10 out of 60, or 16·6 per cent.

7. The figure of "average" strength is calculated in accordance with the instructions of the Government of India contained in paragraph 4 of letter No. 100, dated 4th July, 1878, by adding together the strength on the 1st January, the 1st July, and the 31st December, and dividing by three. It is of course obvious that, in taking the average of periods parted by such wide intervals as six months, considerable liability to error is involved. Moreover, the calculation is exposed to the same special falsification as was noticed with regard to the mode of calculating "actual" strength, on account of the period when the variations of the numbers occur.

Calculations on "average strength.

Thus, in a garden where the number of coolies on the 1st January and 1st July had been 200 and 150, respectively, and had fallen in November and December to 50, the same "average" strength would be shown as if the numbers had been in January and July, 50 and 100, and had been raised in November and December to 250. But if the numbers of deaths had been the same, the death-rate in both cases would be identical when calculated according to the rule, whereas the real average number of coolies exposed during the year to the risk of death was in the first case clearly as much above the deduced average, 133, as in the second case it was below this average, and, consequently, the death or desertion-rates shown in the first case would have been too high, in the second case too low.

The fact, however, which has above been noticed, that by far the majority of importations takes place in the first half year, would render the occurrence of the second of the two above cases very infrequent.

It would probably give a result more nearly approaching accuracy to calculate separately the percentages of death and desertion on the figures of each half year separately, taking the mean of the strength at the beginning and end of each half year, and to take the mean between these two percentages as the percentage on the year's returns.

As the figures and percentages at present stand, it must be accepted from the above considerations that the percentages calculated on "actual" strength are invariably and necessarily below the truth, whereas those calculated on "average" strength are, except in very special instances, too high.

Supply of rice to labourers.

8. In consequence of representations which were made to the Chief Commissioner as to the heavy loss sustained by many gardens in having to supply rice at Rs. 3 a maund to Act-VII. coolies when the ruling price was much higher, inquiries were made,—first, to ascertain if labourers other than those under Act VII. were supplied with rice at Rs. 3 a maund, and, secondly, whether, in view of a possible permanent rise in the price of rice, any alteration in the law seemed desirable.

In answer to these inquiries, it was ascertained that, except in Cachar, it was not customary to supply other than Act-VII. labourers regularly with rice at Rs. 3 a maund; but that, when the actual cost of rice to the manager was but little above Rs. 3 a maund, it was generally the practice throughout Assam Proper to sell it at the rate of Rs. 3 a maund to all coolies without distinction. It was not thought advisable that any change should be made in the law, as it was not certain that the present high prices would continue. The supply of rice at a rate below the market price is only another form of raising wages. It seems probable that, if the latter course were directly pursued, the employers would find the cost of labour more expensive than under the present system. For, if wages were raised proportionately to the rise in the price of food, the loss to the employer from the increased wages would be greater than the present loss upon the rice, which is sold under cost price.

Thus, in 1872, when the average price of rice was under Rs. 3 a maund throughout Assam, the agreement generally specified Rs. 5 a month wage, and rice had to be sold, if required, at Rs. 3 a maund, or less if so arranged. Now rice is in some districts over Rs. 5 a maund, and all other food has increased similarly. If the wages were increased in proportion to this rise in price of food, a wage of Rs. 8-5 would have to be paid, and this would be more expensive to the employer than the present loss of Rs. 2 upon every maund of rice sold to Act-VII. coolies only, for 10 chittacks of rice a day (the legal rate demandable) is less than half a maund (18 seers 12 chittacks) a month, and represents therefore a loss of less than Re. 1 a month. It is also clear that, although some compensation is thus given for the dearness of rice, the increase in cost of all the other commodities he requires is borne by the coolie, and that thus the tea-planter has to some extent shifted on to his labourers the effect on general prices of the fall in the value of silver, which at the same time increases the value of his own manufacture. The present system is therefore obviously, under the existing circumstances, advantageous to the planter in respect to his Act-VII. coolies, and there can besides be little doubt that the artificial restriction thus imposed on the wages of these labourers tends to retard any further rise of the wages of other labour. Were the money wages of Act-VII. coolies increased, other labourers would certainly demand more.

It will probably for a long time be necessary that employers on out-of-the-way gardens should make special provision for supplying their labourers with food; but it is a matter which will probably very shortly press for consideration, whether ,in view of the permanent increase of general prices, the fixed rate of remuneration for labourers under the Act does not need revision.

Desertions.

9. In the matter of desertions, the Government of India have signified their concurrence in the opinion expressed by the Chief Commissioner, that it is not advisable to impose any measures of restriction upon the engagement of coolies,—such as requiring all contracts to be registered before a Magistrate,—so long as employers themselves are averse to such measures. The very large number of desertions during the year under report, and the fact that desertions have increased by over 50 per cent. during the year, gives a new importance to this question, but does not lead the Chief Commissioner to modify the views formerly expressed by him. There were 3,954 Act-VII. coolies and 3,561 non-Act coolies who deserted, or 7,515 in all. If each Act-VII. coolie be estimated to have cost the garden from which he deserts Rs. 80, a low average probably for the whole Province, these alone represent a loss of

Rs. 3,16,320 to the gardens from which they desert. The non-Act coolies' desertions would not represent so great a money loss to their employers, but would represent greater inconvenience, since theirs is the best class of labour. As, however, the coolies generally only go from one garden to another, there is little or no loss of total aggregate labour force to the Province owing to desertions.

That these enormous losses should not have induced the whole body of planters to take joint action is surprising: a mutual determination to inquire invariably into the antecedents of new arrivals, and cordial assistance given to each other in arresting deserters, would in all probability go far to suppress desertion. But, hitherto, conflicting interests have stood in the way of all attempts at combination, and it must be remembered that the planters who, from position and superior intelligence would be the natural leaders of such a movement, are precisely those who suffer least from this cause, as, their gardens being usually better managed, desertions from them are much less frequent.

Inspection of gardens.

10. As was noticed by the Government of India in their Resolution upon last year's Immigration Report, Sir Steuart Bayley has had under consideration the question whether all gardens should be inspected at stated intervals, or whether a classification should be made of gardens according to their inspection needs. The Chief Commissioner is, after further consideration, averse to drawing any hard-and-fast line between gardens. It is undoubtedly the case that many gardens are so healthily situated, and so well managed, as to require little or no inspection. But managers change, and a garden which has formerly been healthy, through a change from good to bad management, may become extremely unhealthy. Any list which could be proposed on the basis of general healthiness and good management would be liable to continual change, and would be likely to be misleading. Also, it would be practically impossible to prevent the list becoming generally known, and a distinction founded on good management would give rise probably to much ill-feeling. On the whole, Sir Steuart Bayley is of opinion that a large discretion must be given to the Inspector, and he will willingly accept continued healthiness and continued good management of a garden as a sufficient reason for less frequent inspection.

11. The duty of inspection, the Chief Commissioner is strongly of opinion, should be performed as far as possible by the executive officers of each district, rather than by a special departmental officer exclusively, as he considers that, while the local experience of these District Officers and their proximity to the gardens enable them most effectively to inspect, the necessity involved of frequently travelling about their districts, and of coming into contact with both employers and employed, and of observing the needs of their district, is of very great administrative advantage. Orders are now under issue to give further effect to these views in the districts of Sibságar and Lakhimpur, where the inspection has hitherto been performed solely by the Inspector of Labourers of the Upper Assam Circle.

12. During the year under review the duty of inspection was, on the whole, adequately performed. There was an increase of 20 in the number of gardens employing Act-VII. coolies. There was an increase of 67 among these gardens visited once, and an increase of 7 among these gardens visited twice. There was, however, a decrease of 11 in those visited three times. There was also an increase in the inspection of gardens employing exclusively non-Act coolies. Altogether, there were 639 inspections held, against 571 for last year, or an increase of 68 inspections. Subjoined is the table required by para. 5 of Resolution of Government of India on Immigration Report of 1875:—

Name of District.	Number of existing tea-gardens.						Number of tea-gardens visited once only in the year.					
	Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.		Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.	
	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.
Sylhet	29	38	33	30	62	68	22	22	15	21	37	43
Cachar	143	126	27	47	170	173	85	99	12	48	97	147
Kámrúp	6	8	66	72	72	80	1	....	....	....	1	....
Darrang	45	50	58	66	103	116	4	3	....	....	4	3
Nowgong	20	26	40	68	60	93	6	5	....	....	6	5
Sibságar	125	137	72	62	197	199	31	96	14	12	54	108
Lakhimpur	112	116	56	68	168	184	61	52	9	15	70	67
Total	480	500	352	413	832	913	210	277	50	93	278	373

Name of District.	Number of tea-gardens visited twice in the year.						Number of tea-gardens visited thrice in the year.						Number of tea-gardens not visited during the year.					
	Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of, or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.		Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.		Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of or together with other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.	
	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.
Sylhet	3	7	..	..	3	7	....	....	..	..	..	..	4	9	18	9	22	18
Cachar	36	20	2	..	38	20	17	4	2	..	19	4	5	3	11	2	16	5
Kámrúp	3	7	..	..	3	7	2	....	..	..	2	..	....	1	66	72	66	73
Darrang	38	44	..	..	38	44	2	2	..	..	2	2	1	1	58	66	59	67
Nowgong	12	12	..	..	12	12	....	....	..	..	..	..	2	8	40	68	42	76
Sibságar	9	20	..	1	9	21	....	2	..	..	..	2	85	10	58	49	143	68
Lakhimpur	9	7	..	..	9	7	....	2	..	..	..	2	42	55	47	53	89	108
Total ..	110	117	2	1	112	118	21	10	2	..	23	10	139	96	298	319	437	415

There were 96 gardens employing Act-VII. coolies uninspected during the year. These were situated chiefly this year, as last year, in Sibságar and Lakhimpur, which are under a special Inspector. But, whereas last year 127 gardens in these districts were unvisited, this year there were 74 gardens unvisited. The need of inspection in these districts is probably for many reasons greater than elsewhere. The Chief Commissioner hopes that measures, which, as has been already stated, are now being taken to require more inspection work to be performed by the District Officers, will enable a better result to be obtained in future in this circle.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

SECTION I.—IMPORTATIONS.

The total provincial importations for the year 1878 were 43,061 immigrants. This is exclusive of deaths and desertions *en route*, and represents the actual arrivals on the gardens. Of these, 19,972 were Act-VII. coolies recruited by garden-sirdars, and 7,390 Act-VII. coolies recruited by contractors. Of non-Act coolie importations there were of adults 4,827, children 8,299, and infants 2,573.

2. Subjoined is a comparative statement of importations for the last three years. It will be seen from this that coolies recruited by garden-sirdars have been steadily increasing in numbers, while contractors' coolies show a tendency to decline, or at most to remain stationary:—

		1878.	1877.	1876.
Act-VII.	Garden-sirdars	19,972	14,382	12,309
	Contractors	7,390	8,286	7,504
Non-Act	Adults.....	4,827	3,095	7,562
	Children	8,299	4,760	4,349
	Infants	2,573	1,374	2,559
	Total	43,061	31,897	34,283

The large increase during the present year in the numbers of children accompanying the immigrants is noticeable. Comparing the numbers of the total adults imported in this and the two preceding years, it appears that the proportion of children to each 100 adults imported was 25 in 1876, 24 in 1877, and 33 in 1878. A reason for this may perhaps be found in the large increase of coolies recruited by garden-sirdars. It is probable that recruits of this class are more frequently attended by their families.

It may be noticed that there was a decline of importations in 1877, caused by a large decrease among non-Act coolies; but the numbers of Act-VII. labourers show a steady advance, the increase in the present year being very considerable.

3. Considering the importations of adults in detail in regard to nationality and sex, it appears that 16,932 immigrants came from Chota Nagpur, 8,419 from North-Western Provinces, and 6,626 from Bengal; 189 from Madras, and 23 from Nepal. Details of the children and infants according to nationality are not afforded by the present returns, and may perhaps be dispensed with.

Compared with last year, there is a large increase in the importations from Chota Nagpur, a considerable increase in immigrants from the North-Western Provinces, while importations from Bengal show a marked, and from Madras an enormous, decrease. There were 121 labourers imported from Bombay in 1877, but none at all in this year. Subjoined is given in a tabular form, for easy reference, a statement in detail of the nationality and sex of adult imported coolies of all classes for 1878 and 1877. No very notable change is apparent in the proportions of the sexes. A slightly increased proportion of females is, however, observable, for, while 59·01 of the importations were men in 1877, this year only 56·9 per cent. are men. The proportion of women is still lower than is desirable,—a disadvantage which has been already noted in discussing the employment of women as garden-recruiters. The proportion of women to men seems to be most unequal (as might be expected) in the case of immigrants from the more distant recruiting fields :—

		Act-VII.				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden sirdars.		Contractors.					
		187	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.
Bengal	Men	2,003	2,203	944	1,596	624	518	3,571	4,317
	Women	1,582	1,861	992	1,116	481	470	3,055	3,447
	Total	3,585	4,064	1,936	2,712	1,105	988	6,626	7,764
North-Western Provinces	Men	2,752	1,936	1,130	1,454	1,023	809	4,905	4,199
	Women	1,946	1,327	823	620	745	622	3,514	2,569
	Total	4,698	3,263	1,953	2,074	1,768	1,431	8,419	6,768
Chota Nagpur	Men	6,634	3,884	1,997	1,617	1,097	319	9,728	5,820
	Women	5,012	2,999	1,380	891	812	303	7,204	4,193
	Total	11,646	6,883	3,377	2,508	1,909	622	16,932	10,013
Nepal	Men	3	.....	10	1	.....	3	13	4
	Women	1	.....	9	1	.....	.....	10	1
	Total	4	.....	19	2	.....	3	23	5
Madras	Men	27	91	73	646	29	26	129	763
	Women	12	51	32	253	16	25	60	329
	Total	39	142	105	899	45	51	189	1,092
Bombay	Men	.....	30	.....	72	.....	.....	.....	102
	Women	.....	.....	.....	19	.....	.....	.....	19
	Total	.....	30	.....	91	.....	.....	.....	121
Total	Men	11,419	8,144	4,154	5,386	2,773	1,675	18,346	15,205
	Women	8,553	6,238	3,236	2,900	2,054	1,420	13,843	10,558
GRAND TOTAL		19,972	14,382	7,390	8,286	4,827	3,095	32,189	25,763

4. Besides the immigrants included in these returns, there is a certain amount of other immigration. Under non-Act importations are included all who have been imported by employers. But a few coolies come to this Province in search of work entirely of their own accord, and without any assistance. There are also many who accompany contract immigrants, but without themselves being under contract. Persons of both these classes are no doubt often engaged in this Province on the supposition that they are time-expired labourers.

Inquiries were made into the extent of this immigration, and also into the extent of the direct importation of labourers under ordinary civil contract. It appeared that immigration without any assistance by an employer was rare, but that the practice of free labourers accompanying contract immigrants was not uncommon. Immigration, free to this extent, that the employer who advances the expenses of the labourer has only his civil remedy in case of desertion, exists very largely in Sylhet, and less so in Cachar, in the valley of the Surmá. In the Brahmaputra Valley it exists to a considerable extent in Kámrúp, and to a small extent in Darrang and Nowgong, while it is wholly unknown in Upper Assam. The reason for this is the increasing danger of desertion, in proportion to the distance which the immigrant has to go, temptations to desertion being held out all along the route, to which must be added the impossibility of recovering the advances made when he does desert. There is also perhaps a greater dislike among immigrants to the longer journey.

5. Particulars of the journey of imported coolies are reported in the Bengal Immigration Report and the Dhubri Immigration Report, and it is unnecessary to repeat them here.

SECTION II.—STATISTICS OF THE LABOUR FORCE IN THE PROVINCE.

6. THE additions to the labouring population by importations having been considered, the additions from other sources are found to be 61,804; but these must be considered, from the Provincial point of view, merely as book-transfers, and are a set-off against similar losses. These additions being added to the importations, the total additions become 104,865.

The total population at the beginning of the year was 157,074, and was made up of 46,765 Act-VII. coolies and 63,813 adult non-Act coolies, 27,854 children, and 18,642 infants. The population is compared at the beginning of the last three years in the annexed statement:—

Total force at the beginning of the year.

		1878.	1877.	1876.
Act-VII. labourers		46,765	44,549	42,698
Non-Act	Adults	63,813	55,411	46,199
	Children	27,854	20,921	15,385
	Infants	18,642	14,926	8,506
	Total	157,074	135,807	112,788

The losses during the year 1878 were 82,723 in all, of which 11,421 were owing to deaths, 8,976 to desertions, and the remainder, 62,326, were otherwise deducted. Many of the desertions and of the otherwise-deducted coolies must no doubt be considered, like many of the additions, from the present Provincial point of view, as merely book-transfers. It is not necessary here to analyse these deductions or losses, as the only two items of importance, deaths and desertions, will be more conveniently dealt with separately under these headings.

The nett result of the additions and deductions on the coolie population of the Province is that at the end of 1878 there were 179,216 immigrants in all, of which 49,930 were Act-VII. coolies, 71,650 non-Act adults, 36,600 children, and 21,036 infants, as in the tabular form annexed :—

Total force at the end of the year.

		1878.	1877.	1876.
Act-VII. labourers		49,930	46,765	44,549
Non-Act	Adults	71,650	63,910*	55,411
	Children	36,600	27,863*	20,921
	Infants	21,036	18,681*	14,926
	Total	179,216	157,219	135,807

* The difference of 145 immigrants between the figures shown here and the figures for the beginning of 1878 given in the last table above is owing to the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet not having received returns for 1878 from some gardens employing only non-Act coolies, so that the figures given for the end of the year 1877 do not exactly tally with those given for the beginning of the year 1878. The difference is slight, and cannot be avoided, as the returns not submitted for 1878 are not compulsory returns.

7. An analysis of the nationality and sex of the immigrant population of this Province shows that in 1877 it was composed in largest proportion of Bengalis, then of recruits from Chota Nagpur, next from North-Western Provinces, and next from Madras, with a very few from Bombay and Nepal. This year, owing to the very large importations from Chota Nagpur, recruits from that locality are now the most numerous, Bengal coming second. The proportion of men to women has not materially altered, men being still very much in excess of women. Still, it is noticeable that, whereas in 1877 54·14 per cent. of adults were men, now the men are 54·60 per cent. of the adult force, thus showing that the proportion of women to men is not improving. Last year there were 9,171 men in excess of the women, now there are 11,188. It might have been, perhaps, expected that in a year of large importations like the present the disproportion between the sexes is likely to be increased. But, it has been seen that, as regards importation, the proportion of women to men has slightly improved during the year 1878. The solution of this, which is only an apparent difficulty, will be found partly in the fact that the percentage of mortality of women to their average numbers is greater than that of men. Also, though a larger proportion of women came than last year, still many more men came than women. This disproportion is a matter of considerable importance, as it undoubtedly has much effect on desertions, and tends to prevent the settling down of the immigrant population to

ordinary cultivation in the Province. A tabular statement is given to facilitate comparison of the figures which form the subject of these remarks :—

Nationality.	Sex.	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.	
		1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.
Bengal	Men	7,780	9,008	16,092	14,265	23,872	23,273
	Women	7,710	9,417	14,084	13,040	21,794	22,457
North-Western Provinces.	Men	4,755	4,346	9,470	9,316	14,225	13,662
	Women	3,688	3,329	6,735	6,792	10,423	10,101
Chota Nagpur	Men	14,229	11,009	13,160	10,910	27,389	21,919
	Women	10,963	8,617	11,542	9,075	22,505	17,692
Nepal	Men	5	4	38	41	43	45
	Women	1	3	12	15	13	18
Madras	Men	520	646	302	282	822	928
	Women	233	274	215	194	448	468
Bombay	Men	33	96	.....	.....	33	96
	Women	13	16	.....	.....	13	16
Total	Men	27,322	25,109	39,062	34,814	66,384	59,923
	Women	22,608	21,656	32,588	29,096	55,196	50,752
Grand Total	.....	49,930	46,765	71,650	63,910	121,580	110,675

8. The preceding figures do not, of course, include the whole of the labouring population on the tea-gardens; but they include all labourers on any kind of contract or engagement, whether under Act VII. of 1873, or under Act XIII. of 1859.

Almost all the permanent staff on all gardens (except a few which are exceptionally situated) is placed under one or other of these Acts. But, besides these labourers, there is in some districts a considerable amount of local labour obtained from hillmen, plains villagers, and time-expired coolies, who do not wish to bind themselves by a long-term contract. It is difficult to estimate the amount of this labour. It is very considerable in amount in Sylhet, and exists to some extent in Cachar, Kámrúp, Darrang, and Nowgong. No returns are usually furnished of these labourers, even from gardens which furnish returns, and where they form a large proportion of the labour force. Some few gardens are almost exclusively worked by such labour, and most gardens employ it more or less, whenever procurable, on miscellaneous work. But the men are not permanently borne on the books, their numbers are constantly varying, and information concerning them could only be obtained from business registers of wages paid, and of daily attendance. Where such labour is scarce, and not to be depended on, it is found necessary to place all labourers under Act VII. or Act XIII.

SECTION III.—DESERTIONS.

9. The total number of desertions during the year for the Province were 7,515 of all classes, as against 4,724 last year. Of Act-VII. coolies, 3,954 deserted, as against 2,584 last year, and of non-Act coolies 3,561, as against 2,140, showing an increase of 1,370 and 1,421, respectively.

Calculated on average strength and actual strength, the percentages of desertions of Act-VII. coolies are 7·78 and 5·29, respectively, and the percentage of desertions of non-Act coolies to their average and actual strength are 5·18 and 3·38. These percentages are very considerably above the percentages of last year, which were on average strength 5·65 for Act-VII. coolies, and 3·58 for non-Act coolies.

Details of desertions according to nationality and sex will be found in the table appended:—

Nationality.	Sex.	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.		Percentage of desertions among							
								Act-VII.				Non-Act.			
								1878.		1877.		1878.		1877.	
		1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	Average strength.	Actual strength.	Average strength.	Actual strength.	Average strength.	Actual strength.	Average strength.	Actual strength.
Bengal	Men	631	590	628	456	2,187	1,652	7·36	5·23	6·28	4·30	4·08	2·74	3·40	2·25
	Women	410	284	518	372			4·70	3·40	2·34	1·72	3·80	2·54	3·06	2·03
North-West Provinces	Men	1,365	891	1,048	620	3,279	1,858	27·27	16·31	22·48	12·48	11·04	6·56	6·85	4·37
	Women	366	158	500	189			9·58	5·96	5·44	3·53	7·54	4·47	3·04	1·98
Chota-Nagpur	Men	923	503	521	294	1,952	1,116	6·90	4·56	4·82	3·25	4·21	2·25	2·91	1·98
	Women	199	132	309	187			1·97	1·32	1·57	1·09	2·94	1·96	2·24	1·52
Nepal	Men	2	....	9	11	13	12	3·33	11·76	....	....	20·93	12·00	23·40	12·94
	Women	..	1	2	....			....	....	33·33	25·00	15·38	9·52	....	....
Madras	Men	42	64	23	8	73	81	6·82	5·11	15·64	6·38	7·41	4·82	2·73	1·72
	Women	5	6	3	3			1·89	1·57	3·52	1·62	1·40	1·03	1·50	0·91
Bombay	Men	9	5	....	....	11	5	23·07	20·00	10·41	4·55	....	....	....	....
	Women	2	....	....	....			14·28	12·50	....	....	....	....	....	....
Total	Men	2,972	2,053	2,229	1,389	7,515	4,724	10·76	7·23	8·47	5·49	5·93	3·87	4·24	2·79
	Women	982	531	1,332	751			4·23	2·92	2·47	1·74	4·27	2·79	2·74	1·87
	Total	3,954	2,584	3,561	2,140	....	....	7·78	5·29	5·65	3·81	5·18	3·38	3·58	2·38

10. In judging, however, of the actual frequency of desertion as shown by these figures, it is necessary to observe that the rates deduced either from the "average strength" or "actual strength" here shown are rather misleading, for the same reasons and to the same extent as the mortality rates calculated on the same standards. The subject has been discussed in para. 6, Section II., of Chapter I. of this report, but it is necessary to draw attention again to the fact that the percentage of desertions on average strength as now calculated gives a very exaggerated notion of the real proportion of desertions. But, although these desertion-rates are not actually true, they are of value when placed in comparison with the rates similarly deduced for other years, as indicating truly any increase or decrease in the general tendency to desert.

11. Considering the desertions according to the nationality and sex of the deserters, it may be noticed first of all that a very much larger number of men than of women desert. This is easily explained by the fact of the comparative facility for a man to desert. It is far more difficult for a woman to make her escape, hampered, as she often is, with children who must be carried. Besides, the women are generally married, and so two people must desert, the husband and wife, and this renders it easier to detect the deserters than where a man escapes singly. The unmarried men also, who are a very large number, are more liable to desert on account of their comparatively discontented and unsettled habits.

12. Next, as regards nationality, the desertions are greatest among the North-West Provinces immigrants. Neglecting people from Nepal, Madras, and Bombay, whose numbers are small, the percentage of desertions to average strength rose to the enormous number of 27·27 for North-West Provinces Act-VII. men and 11·04 for non-Act men of the same class. The next highest rate of desertions of men being Bengal, 7·36 and 4·08, and Chota Nagpur, 6·90 and 4·21 for Act-VII. and non-Act men respectively. Excepting Chota Nagpur Act-VII. coolies this order follows the order of the mortality-rate. The desertions of Bengal women are much higher than those of Chota Nagpur women.

13. The fact that increased desertion generally follows increased mortality is a matter of general experience. When several of a batch of coolies die, the rest often become panic-stricken, and if they can possibly escape will do so. Besides, where the mortality is high, there is usually general unhealthiness, and this makes the coolies discontented and ready to take any opportunity of escaping. It is also no doubt the case that the difficulty of obtaining food (other than rice) to which the coolie has been accustomed is an additional cause of mortality, and at the same time of the discontent which leads to desertion. Hence, mortality and desertion naturally go together: but there are other causes at work which prevent this being invariably the case.

14. Taken district by district, as in the tabular statement given below, it will be seen that the desertions are greatest in Sylhet and Cachar, and, if an exception be made for Nowgong, gradually diminish as the Brahmaputra Valley is ascended. That is to say, the more remote the district, the lower the desertion-rate: the reason probably being, not that

the labourer is ordinarily more contented in the remoter districts, but that in the less remote and more populous districts desertion is easier and discovery more difficult:—

	Total desertions.		Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Percentage of desertions among							
							Act-VII.				Non-Act.			
							Actual strength.		Average strength.		Actual strength.		Average strength.	
	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.
Sylhet	1,928	668	642	224	1,281	444	15·72	7·53	22·74	11·40	9·37	5·29	14·99	7·16
Cachar	3,554	2,381	1,874	1,204	1,680	1,127	9·12	5·49	13·83	8·11	3·43	2·47	5·66	3·93
Kámrúp	57	6	13	3	44	3	4·54	0·77	5·60	1·17	6·35	0·40	8·83	0·71
Darrang	312	354	228	150	84	204	3·29	2·68	5·00	3·93	1·46	4·50	2·12	6·60
Nowgong	201	113	160	92	41	21	6·27	5·48	11·12	8·55	1·71	1·03	3·00	1·83
Sibságar	834	799	535	541	299	258	2·49	2·78	3·51	4·18	1·41	1·39	1·89	1·89
Lakhimpur	634	453	502	370	132	83	2·66	2·33	3·87	3·42	1·03	0·82	1·47	1·26
Total	7,515	4,724	3,954	2,584	3,561	2,140	5·29	3·81	7·78	5·65	3·38	2·38	5·18	3·58

If the exceptions due to these special causes be eliminated, it will be still found that within each district the desertions are the greatest among the classes which show the heaviest mortality. Thus, in Sylhet the desertions are highest among coolies from the North-West Provinces, and so are the deaths, and the same is the case in Cachar.

15. In accordance with the wish of the Government of India, expressed in para. 5 of letter No. 81-82, dated the 11th May, 1877, a statement is given of desertions of Non-Act men and women, according to nationality and length of residence, showing dependents of Act-VII. coolies under three years, and coolies over three years' residence, calculated on the average strength of each of these classes:—

Nationality.	Sex.	Total number of desertions.	Number of desertions among			Percentage of desertions among			
			Dependents.	Free immigrants under 3 years.	Free immigrants over 3 years.	Dependents.	Free immigrants under 3 years.	Free immigrants over 3 years.	Total number of desertions.
Bengal ...	Men	628	68	159	401	7·33	12·50	3·09	4·13
	Women	518	56	111	351	7·73	9·00	3·02	3·08
North-Western Provinces.	Men	1,048	104	345	599	15·66	18·10	8·81	11·18
	Women	500	37	122	341	9·48	8·81	6·87	7·42
Chota Nagpur ...	Men	521	72	101	348	6·49	7·67	3·62	4·32
	Women	309	41	33	235	4·40	3·54	2·78	2·99
Nepal ...	Men	9	.....	1	8	.....	100·00	21·05	23·07
	Women	2	.....	2	.....	.....	.....*	.....	15·38
Madras ...	Men	23	3	.....	20	18·75	.....	8·23	7·87
	Women	3	1	.....	2	10·00	.....	1·10	1·47
Total ...	Men	2,229	247	606	1,376	9·09	13·38	4·63	6·03
	Women	1,332	135	268	929	6·56	7·52	3·68	4·32
		3,561	382	874	2,305	8·00	10·80	4·20	5·25

* Calculated on the average number of labourers employed at the beginning and end of the year.
† Average number, being below one, percentage is not calculated.

The only point of importance which appears is the fact, which could be deduced from the general returns, and which is a matter of general experience, namely, that new arrivals desert much more frequently than coolies long resident in the Province.

As to the dependents, their desertion follows the desertion of the Act-VII. coolies, to whom they belong, the percentages being closely similar,—the desertions of dependents being 8 per cent. on average strength, while the percentage of desertions among Act-VII. coolies is 7·78 per cent. The exact relation between the two is complicated by the consideration that sometimes the dependents are deserted by those on whom they depend and by the absence of any means of judging how many Act-VII. coolies who had dependents deserted.

16. It would be desirable, however, the Chief Commissioner thinks, if the collection of the information given in this table could be discontinued, as, by complicating the returns and increasing their difficulty, and directing undue attention on the part of employers to comparatively unimportant points, it tends to decrease their accuracy in regard to particulars of far greater importance, and the Chief Commissioner would therefore solicit the

permission of the Government of India to discontinue collecting this information. It is only in the direction of discontinuing such details of information as can best be spared that the Chief Commissioner sees any prospect of simplifying the returns and increasing their accuracy. The number of free immigrants under three years' residence is only about 8,000, and their condition in all important respects after arrival in the Province is precisely the same as that of Act-VII. coolies. The rate of desertion among dependents does not seem a fact of very great importance: indeed, in the employer's view, their desertion, when the labourers to whom they belong have absconded, is rather to be encouraged, as removing a burden on the estate.

SECTION IV.—MORTALITY.

17. The mortality of adults only will be dealt with in this section, that of children will be more conveniently dealt with in a separate section.

The total number of Act-VII. coolies who died during the year was 5,396, and of non-Act coolies was 2,676, or 8,072 in all. Last year, 3,740 Act-VII. coolies died, and 1,558 non-Act coolies, or 5,298 in all. There is thus a very great increase in the total mortality. The coolie force has, as shown above, increased during the year, but not in proportion to the increase in the mortality. The percentage of mortality, calculated on the average strength (50,763 and 68,713) shows 10·62 for Act-VII. and 3·89 for non-Act coolies, and 6·75 for all coolies together for 1878. The death-rate in the suburbs of Calcutta for this year, 1878, is said to have been 66·94 per thousand. For 1877, the percentages were for Act-VII. coolies 8·19, for non-Act 2·61, and 5·03 for all coolies together. It is not possible to distinguish between the deaths of Act-VII. coolies recruited by contractors and by garden-sirdars.

This general increase in mortality during the present year is, perhaps, in a great measure due to the exceptional unhealthiness of the Province generally, which resulted from the unseasonable weather, heavy floods in some districts being followed by long periods of exceptional dryness. There is also, probably, very great reason to think that the high price of all food staples during the year had its effect on the increased rate of mortality. The increased general mortality is further due to the increased importations of the year, it being found to be generally the case that as importations increase deaths increase in a larger proportion among the imported coolies. It is also swelled by the exceptional and wholly unprecedented mortality during this year of North-West Province coolies, and the diminished, but still abnormally heavy, mortality among Madras coolies. In both these classes the mortality is due, in the Chief Commissioner's opinion, to a multitude of labourers, already weakened by insufficient nourishment, owing to the pressure of high prices at their homes, being sent up to labour in a climate, the conditions of which their enfeebled constitutions were unable to withstand.

18. Considered by nationality, the death-rate is greatest among North-West Provinces coolies, having risen among the Act-VII. labourers of this class from 861 to 1,530, or from 15·11 per cent. for men to 17·04, and from 9·02 for women to 17·72. It is next greatest among coolies from Madras, being for Act-VII. labourers 11·21 for men and 14·01 for women. But here it is satisfactory to be able to notice a very great decrease in the percentage of mortality from last year, when it reached among these Madras coolies the appalling height of 46·94 for men and 44·11 for women. Bombay shows a decrease of percentage of mortality, but of these coolies the numbers are too few for percentages to be of any value. The absurd results which may be obtained by depending on percentages when dealing with very small numbers are well shown by the fact that the mortality of Nepalese women gives 200 per cent. on average strength, the fact being that 4 died, but that there were never more at one time than 2 women of this nationality in the Province.

The death-rate is least of all among Bengalis, amongst whom it is 6·92 for men and 7·91 for women. The death-rate of Chota Nagpur coolies is next above that of Bengal coolies, being 9·67 for men and 11·33 for women.

The mortality of non-Act coolies, considered by nationality, gives similar results, though the death-rates are all much lower for this class of coolies. A statement is

appended, from which will be seen the totals of deaths and the percentages of deaths for each class separately and together:—

Nationality.	Sex.	Number of deaths among Act-VII.		Number of deaths among non-Act.		Total deaths.		Percentage of deaths to average strength. Act VII.		Non-Act.		Total.	
		1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878	1877.	1878.	1877
Bengal	Men	593	673	417	344	1,010	1,017	6 92	7 17	2 71	2 56	4 46	4·18
	Women	690	584	368	276	1 058	860	7 91	5·86	2 70	2 27		
North-Western Provinces	Men	853	590	559	270	1,412	860	17·04	15 11	5 89	2 98	9 70	5·91
	Women	677	262	349	178	1,026	440	17 72	9 02	5 12	2 86		
Chota Nagpur	Men	1,293	752	517	247	1,810	999	9 67	7·21	4 18	2 47	7 37	4 89
	Women	1,173	595	450	224	1,623	819	11·33	7 10	4 28	2 60		
Nepal	Men	3	3	..	4	3	7	50 00	60 00	..	8·51	..	..
	Women	4	....	..	..	4	..	200·00	...	..	..		
Madras	Men	69	192	10	7	79	199	11·21	46·94	3 22	2·88	8 70	26·30
	Women	37	75	6	8	43	83	14·01	44 11	2 81	4 00		
Bombay	Men	3	2	..	.	3	2	7 69	4 16	.	..	7 54	8·92
	Women	1	3	..	..	1	3	7·14	37 50	.	.		
Total	Men	2,814	2 221	1,508	872	4,317	3,093	10 19	9 16	4 00	2 66	6 62	5 42
	Women	2 582	1,519	1,173	686	3 755	2,205	11 14	7 09	3 76	2 54	6·51	4 56
Men and women taken together		5,396	3,740	2,676	1,558	8,072	5,298	10 62	8·19	3 89	2·61	6·75	5·03

19. Considered according to sex, the mortality of women is slightly in excess of that of men, being 6·91 for all women and 6·62 for all men. A comparison of the details of percentages of deaths of women to men in each class does not show any important variations, allowance being made for exceptional circumstances, where the numbers dealt with are small.

20. Considered according to districts, the total mortality of all classes is highest in the order of the following list:—

1878.	Death rate.	1877.	Death rate.
Nowgong	11·09	Darrang	8·10
Darrang	9·64	Nowgong	7·15
Sibságar	7·72	Sibságar	6·90
Lakhimpur	7·35	Lakhimpur	6·73
Sylhet	5·72	Kámrúp	6·20
Cachar	5·21	Sylhet	3·14
Kámrúp	4·79	Cachar	2·93

The low position of Kámrúp in the list for this year must be attributed to the almost entire absence in that district (only 21 men in all) of North-West Provinces coolies, amongst whom, as has been seen, the heaviest mortality has occurred. A table is given to facilitate further comparison between the several districts, but it will be seen that this order holds very closely, if Act-VII. and non-Act coolies be considered separately:—

Districts.	Number of deaths among Act VII.		Non-Act.		Total.		Percentage of deaths to average strength Act VII		Non Act.		Total.	
	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.	1878.	1877.
Nowgong	239	96	72	63	311	159	16 62	8 92	5·27	5·50	11 09	7·15
Darrang	643	435	179	124	822	559	14 10	11 42	4 51	4 01	9 64	8 10
Sibságar	1,702	1,400	691	435	2 393	1 835	11 17	10 82	4 38	3 19	7 72	6 90
Lakhimpur	1,288	962	319	209	1,607	1 171	9 95	8 89	3 57	3 18	7·35	6·73
Sylhet	229	95	422	161	651	256	8 11	4 92	4·93	2 59	6·72	3 14
Cachar	1,278	700	975	546	2,253	1,276	9 43	4 91	3 28	1 90	5·21	2·93
Kámrúp	17	22	18	20	35	42	7 32	8·59	3 61	4 75	4 79	6·20
Total	5,396	3,740	2,676	1,558	8,072	5,298	10 62	8 19	3 89	2 61	6 75	5·03

21. It was suggested in the Resolution by the Government of India on the Immigration Report for 1877 that the opening out of new gardens was a probable cause of excessive mortality, and that the number of gardens opened might be placed in juxtaposition with the death-rate. According to the returns of new gardens brought on the books, it appears that the order is, taking three years together,—

District.	Number of new gardens opened. 1876.	1877.	1878.	Total.
Lakhimpur	2	1	13	16
Cachar	8	5	2	15
Nowgong	5	...	5	10
Sibságar	2	5	2	9
Sylhet	5	4	...	9
Darrang	1	2	2	5
Kámrúp	...	...	1	1

Three years are taken, because the mere fact of a garden coming on to the Inspector's books does not mean that all the new coolies required to work it are imported in that year. On

the contrary, importations (in excess of losses) are continued steadily until the garden has reached its full development in the fourth or fifth year, and generally for at least three years new land is cleared and plants put out. But the opening of new gardens, or rather the bringing them on the Inspector's books, by no means represents the extent of new ground broken, because this takes no account of extensions of previously existing gardens. If the increase of outturn of tea in 1878 over 1876 be taken from the tea cultivation report another order is given:—

Sibságar.	Sylhet.
Lakhimpur.	Nowgong.
Cachar.	Kámrúp.
Darrang.	

This is the order of increase of outturn in total pounds, and not of percentage of increase over previous outturn. The order calculated in this way is—

Nowgong	16·6 per cent.
Sibságar	6·6 " "
Sylhet	6·1 " "
Darrang	5 0 " "
Kámrup	Decrease.*
Cachar	"
Lakhimpur	"

* Due to the manufacture of a finer class of tea generally

Here last year's outturn and the previous year's, 1877, are alone considered, and in these years Sibságar shows the greatest increase in weight of outturn and Sylhet the next greatest. Altogether, taking the apparent activity of tea cultivation, both in opening new gardens and in the extension of old gardens, the following seems to be the order:—

Sibságar.	Sylhet.
Lakhimpur.	Darrang.
Cachar.	Kamrup (stationary).
Nowgong.	

But this, it will be seen, only roughly agrees with the death-rate. The true conclusion to be derived seems to be that the opening of new gardens and the extension of old gardens, if in specially unhealthy places, necessarily raises the rate of mortality of the district, but that such extensions, compared with the whole tea cultivation, are too small to have a readily perceptible effect on the general district mortality, at least apart from their general effect, small or great, in increasing the proportion of the imported to other coolies.

22. It is well known and abundantly proved by the statistics that the death-rate is highest among newly-imported coolies, and falls rapidly as the length of residence increases, partly, no doubt, because the weaker coolies have died out, and partly owing to gradual acclimatization of the survivors, or rather to their gradual adaptation to the surrounding conditions, not only of climate, but of the many novel circumstances of their life as labourers on a tea-garden. If the districts, however, be grouped in order of their gross importations, this order by no means agrees with the rate of mortality, for Nowgong, with by far the heaviest mortality, would then come last but one. But, if the districts be grouped in order of the ratio of importations during the year to the total coolie population at the end of the year, the order obtained is—

	Per cent
Nowgong	50·00
Lakhimpur	31 72
Darrang	32 81
Sibságar	27·10
Sylhet	26·09
Kámrúp	24·64
Cachar	17 65

Sylhet, it will be noticed, does not take the same position in regard to increase of importations as it does in regard to proportional increase of outturn of tea, and this is due to the larger supply of local labour in that district.

This last order agrees much more nearly with the order of death-rate than any of the other lists of districts. In fact, it shows quite as close a general resemblance as can be expected when it is remembered that the mortality is not the result of any one single cause, but of a combination of causes.

23. A tabular statement is given of the deaths and the percentages of deaths to average strength according to locality and sex for dependents of Act-VII. coolies, for non-Act coolies under three years' and non-Act coolies over three years' residence, in accordance with instructions contained in para. 5 of letter No. 81-82, dated 11th May, 1877.

The general result obtained is that dependents die at the rate of 6 22 per cent, coolies under three years at 4 56 and over three years at 3·66. These figures should not be pressed to prove more than the general fact that increased length of residence is accompanied

by a diminished death-rate,—for the dependents are comparatively few, and they are, as a class, composed largely of the old and infirm :—

Nationality.	Sex.	Number of deaths among				Percentage of deaths to average strength.				Average number (the average of the number of immigrants employed at the beginning and end of the year).			
		Dependents.	Free immigrants under 3 years.	Free immigrants over 3 years.	Total	Dependents.	Free immigrants under 3 years.	Free immigrants over 3 years.	Total.	Dependents.	Free immigrants under 3 years.	Free immigrants over 3 years.	Total.
Bengal	Men	50	66	301	417	5·39	5·19	2·31	2·74	927	1,271	12,976	15,175
	Women	19	85	314	368	2·62	2·83	2·70	2·71	724	1,233	11,002	13,560
North-Western Provinces	Men	67	123	369	559	10·09	6·45	5·42	5·96	664	1,906	6,797	9,367
	Women	37	71	241	349	9·18	5·13	4·85	5·17	890	1,384	4,963	6,738
Chota Nagpur	Men	57	43	417	517	5·14	3·26	4·14	4·29	1,168	1,316	9,608	12,033
	Women	62	24	364	450	6·66	2·57	4·30	4·26	930	931	8,446	10,306
Nepal	Men	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	1	38	39
	Women	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	13	13
Madras	Men	5	3	2	10	31·25	9·37	0·82	3·42	16	32	243	292
	Women	....	4	2	6	....	30·76	1·10	2·94	10	13	181	204
Total	Men	179	235	1,089	1,503	6·59	5·19	3·67	4·07*	2,716	4,527	29,663	36,907
	Women	118	184	921	1,173	5·74	3·76	3·65	3·80*	2,055	3,562	25,207	30,824
Men and women taken together.	.....	297	369	2,010	2,676	6·22	4·56	3·66	3·95*	4,772	8,089	54,870	67,731

* These percentages of deaths among non-Act coolies differ from those given previously, as they are calculated on the average number of labourers employed at the beginning and at the end of the year only.

With the exception of some abnormal percentages, upon which, since they are based upon small numbers, it is unsafe to found any general speculations, nothing of importance appears from a detailed examination of this table.

24. On inquiring into the diseases from which the coolies have died, some inaccuracy results from infants and children having been included along with adults in the returns from Sylhet which show the causes of death. The error will be corrected in future, and is not of great importance, but is mentioned to explain some slight discrepancies in the figures of the tables.

Taking the whole Province and deaths of all adults and of minors and infants in Sylhet only, it appears that of a total of 8,232 deaths, 1,676 resulted from cholera, 2,833 from dysentery, 952 from jungle fever, and 2,771 from other causes.

25. Considered district by district, the tabular statements appended show the recorded causes of death for Act-VII. coolies and for Non-Act coolies (including minors and infants from Sylhet only), respectively:—

Causes of deaths among labourers engaged under Act VII.

District.	Average number of labourers employed in 1878.	Deaths from					Percentage of deaths.
		Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes	Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sylhet	2,822	39	71	35	84	229	8·11
Cachar	13,546	199	465	204	410	1,278	9·43
Kámrup	232	3	6	3	5	17	7·32
Darrang	4,558	231	177	11	224	643	14·10
Nowgong	1,437	58	54	26	101	239	16·63
Sibságar	15,224	299	702	105	596	1,702	11·17
Lakhimpur	12,943	212	468	125	483	1,288	9·95
Total	50,763	1,041	1,943	509	1,903	5,396	10·62

Causes of deaths among non-Act coolies.

District.	Average number of labourers employed in 1878.	Deaths from					Percentage of deaths.
		Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sylhet	11,930*	99	128	128†	227	582	4·87‡
Cachar	29,668	176	269	208	322	975	3·28
Kámrup	498	7	3	1	7	18	3·61
Darrang	3,962	43	35	9	92	179	4·51
Nowgong	1,366	20	7	7	38	72	5·27
Sibsagar	15,756	231	313	51	96	691	4·38
Lakhimpur	8,920	59	135	39	86	319	3·57
Total	72,100	635	890	443	868	2,836	3·94‡

* These figures include minors and infants.
† These figures include deaths among minors and infants.
‡ The percentages here differ from similar percentages given above, owing to the inclusion here of the minors and infants of Sylhet.

The statement for non-Act coolies should show most correctly the normal danger from each cause of death, so far as this is due to the conditions of the district. The statement for Act-VII. coolies shows the danger more especially for new arrivals. But, indeed, the two statements do not seem to show any very marked difference.

26. Darrang shows an unduly high number of deaths from cholera, compared to total deaths among its Act-VII. coolies, but not so much so among its non-Act coolies. But it is probably not of much use to follow these details too closely, the conclusions which can be safely drawn diminishing rapidly with the area from which the statistics are collected. Attention should be chiefly concentrated upon the general provincial statistics. From these, it is seen that 4,509 deaths are recorded from dysentery and cholera, out of a total of 8,232 deaths. As dysentery and cholera are diseases which are said to be to a large extent preventible, it is clear that whatever success is obtained in checking these two main causes of mortality will strike at the root of the preventible mortality of this Province.

27. When dealing with the general mortality of the Province, a few reasons were given in explanation of the very great increase of mortality of this year; but some further notice seems to be called for of the specially severe mortality among immigrants from the North-West Provinces and from Madras. In reviewing the action which has been taken in regard to the appalling mortality among Madras coolies last year, it was said that it appeared that this mortality was due, not to the exceptional unsuitability of this Province to coolies from Madras, but to the fact that, under exceptional pressure arising from the famine in Madras, a comparatively large number of Madras coolies were driven to emigrate to this Province who had already become much reduced in health and strength, owing to the hardships they had undergone. In consequence of this, they arrived in this Province weakly and unable to withstand the climate and the new conditions of life. The term "acclimatization," when applied to immigrants for the tea-gardens, must be understood to mean much more than merely becoming adapted to the climate. It must include a knowledge of the ways of life suitable to this Province, as determined by the absence or scarcity and dearness of many of the kinds of food to which the immigrant has been in his own country accustomed, a difficulty of the more importance in the first few months of exposure to a new climate. It must also include, in the case of the labourer, the gradual training and hardening of the frame to a new description of severe physical toil. It is, indeed, universally admitted that not for some months is a new recruit able to perform the prescribed task with anything like the ease with which an old hand can perform not only a single but a double (and occasionally a treble) task in the day. Besides these difficulties to be contended with, the new immigrant has no assistance to derive from the small store of earnings or stock,—his cows, pigs and poultry,—which the "acclimatized" coolie has usually managed to accumulate, and which form so important an addition to his well-being. It would not be out of place here to draw attention to paras. 1 to 18, Section IV. of Dr. DeRenzy's Sanitary Report for the year, in which he points out that the mortality among new immigrants is likely to be due in a great measure to their being unable to earn anything more than a full ration of rice at the very time when their constitution requires that the rice diet should be supplemented with ghee and special condiments.

28. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that coolies already weakened physically and constitutionally by prolonged hardship should not be able in many cases to withstand this process of acclimatization. That the Madras immigrants were, in fact, driven to this Province by previous hardship, would seem to be abundantly proved by observing the exceptional importations of this class, which immediately followed the Madras famine. The importations in 1877 of Madras coolies were 1,092. This year they have fallen to 189, and, on an average of three years, excluding 1877, there were only 185 importations a year.

29. Again, the average mortality of Madras coolies other than those imported in this year has not been exceptionally high. Even in 1877 the mortality of non-Act coolies from Madras, *i.e.*, of Madrasees previously imported, was only 2·38 for men, and in 1878 it is only 3·22, where dependents of the coolies imported in 1877 must swell the death list, among whom the mortality was 31·25 per cent. Moreover, the table of deaths according to period of residence shows a rate among residents for three years of 9·37 for men and of 30·76 for women; but among residents over three years a rate of 0·82 for men and 1·10 for women. These figures also show the mortality to have been heaviest in quite recent years, and would be of themselves sufficiently conclusive, but that the numbers of dependents and of non-Act labourers of less than three years' residence are so extremely small as to make percentages unreliable. It would seem, therefore, that the cause of this exceptional mortality is sufficiently traced.

30. Turning to this year's exceptionally heavy mortality among North-West Provinces immigrants, the same cause seems to be clearly traceable. The cause is less distinctly marked, but the death-rate also is less exceptionally severe, than that of Madras coolies. The death-rate of non-Act men from these districts in 1877 was 2·98, and of women 2·86. In 1876 it was 2·96 and 2·46, respectively, or almost exactly the same. In the same years the rate increased for Act-VII. North-West Provinces men from 11·37 to 15·11. For women it remained nearly the same, 9·23 and 9·02. In 1878 the death-rate of Act-VII. men has risen to 17·04, and for women to 17·72. At the same time, the death-rate of non-Act men from the North-West Provinces has risen to 5·89 and of women to 5·12.

The extraordinary rise in the death-rate of North-West Provinces women is remarkable, and not easily explained, but the general result is just what might be expected if the new immigrants who arrived during the last two years were specially unhealthy. Many of the new immigrants pass at once into the non-Act force, but the death-rate of these would rise sensibly only as the numbers of these additions were sensibly increased. But among the Act-VII. force, which is so largely increased by new arrivals, the death-rate would on the assumption rise very rapidly. To this may be added the fact that importations from the North-West Provinces have increased, and are much above the average.

31. On the whole, and considering also the evidence afforded by special inquiries in certain gardens, where the excessive mortality has been found to be entirely among new arrivals from the North-West, and the fact reported from Sylhet, that parties of emaciated coolies from the North-West had come there of their own accord in search of labour, there seems but little reason to doubt the truth of the conclusion which has been drawn. Sir Steuart Bayley, therefore, feels that he is justified in expressing his earnest hope that this mortality among North-West Provinces may be found to be as exceptional and temporary as the mortality among Madrasees during last year.

SECTION V.—BIRTH-RATE AND GENERAL STATISTICS RELATING TO CHILDREN.

32. The total numbers of women in the Province at the end of 1877, and at the end of 1878, were 50,752 and 55,196, respectively, giving an average strength, calculated upon these numbers and the numbers on 30th June, of 54,304. The total number of births in the Province were 5,506, which gives a percentage of 10·13 on the average number of women. A statement is annexed, which shows district by district, and according to nationality, the births, the average number of women, and the percentages. It seems doubtful, however, whether any useful inference can be deduced from the consideration of these detailed figures. The variations seem to be chiefly due to accidental considerations; for it will be at once observed that the larger the numbers dealt with, the more nearly these detailed percentages approach to the percentage taken on the gross:—

District.	Bengal.			N.-W. Provinces.			Chota Nagpur.			Nepal and Bombay.			Madras.			Total.		
	Average number of women employed under Act VII or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Average number of women employed.	Births.	Percentage.	Average number of women employed.	Births.	Percentage.	Average number of women employed	Births.	Percentage.	Average number of women employed.	Births.	Percentage.	Average number of women employed.	Births.	Percentage.
Sylhet	1,745	146	8·36	2,157	218	10·10	947	78	8·23	Nepal ..... 2 Bombay 3	.. .	.. .	80	6	7·50	4,934	448	9·07
Cachar	10,164	1,036	10·19	5,400	643	11·90	4,390	540	12·30	Nepal ..... 7 Bombay	.. ..	.. .	96	10	10·41	20,057	2,2[illegible]	11·[illegible]1
Kámrúp	247	13	5·26	15	.	.	97	2	2·06	Nepal ..... 1 Bombay	.. .	.. .	....	..	.	360	15	4·16
Darrang	2,039	145	7·11	604	38	6·29	1,387	102	7·35	Nepal ..... 1 Bombay	.. .	 .	15		..	4,046	285	7·04
Nowgong	544	30	5·51	97	8	8·24	687	53	7·71	Nepal .... Bombay	.. ..	.. .	1	..	..	1,329	91	6·84
Sibsagar	5,116	618	12·07	1,666	153	9·18	7,160	824	11·50	Nepal ..... . 8 Bombay	1 .	33·33 .	114	2	1·38	14,089	1,598	11·34
Lakhimpur	2,471	168	6·79	688	31	4·50	6,177	638	10·32	Nepal ..... 1 Bombay 11	.. .	.. ..	141	3	2·12	9,489	840	8·85
Total ...	22,326	2,156	9·65	10,627	1,091	10·26	20,845	2,237	10·73	Nepal ..... 15 Bombay 14	1 ..	6·66 ..	477	21	4·61	54,304	5,506	10·13

33. The present returns do not show any noticeable distinction in the birth-rate of women of different provinces, allowance being made for accidental variations where the numbers are small. The average birth-rate is 10·13 per cent. It is difficult to compare this birth-rate with the birth-rate in Europe, as it is calculated upon the number of women only, and not upon the total labouring population. Looking to the peculiar circumstances of the labouring population, and the abnormal excess of men to women, a calculation on total numbers would be of little value.

34. Passing to the consideration of the mortality of infants, it appears that, of an average strength of 20,010 infants under 2 years, 1,776 died, or 88·7 per thousand. Annexed is a table showing their mortality, district by district, and the causes of death, excepting only that, as explained when discussing the deaths of adults, the causes of deaths of infants are not shown separately in the returns received from Sylhet. The districts are arranged in the order of the mortality of infants for comparison with the lists in Chapter II., Section IV., para. 20. which show the order for adult mortality. It will be seen that the order is the same, with the exception that Kámrúp, instead of being last, is now third in the list:—

Districts.	Average number of infants in 1878.	Deaths from					Percentage of deaths.
		Cholera	Dysentery	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Nowgong	251	11	13	10	18	52	20.71
Darrang	1,049	20	20	21	76	137	13·06
Kamrup	54	.....	1	.....	5	6	11 11
Sibságar	7,248	14	74	107	556	751	10 36
Lakhimpur	3,499	10	20	20	232	282	8·05
Sylhet*	1,200	.....	.....	.....	.....	85	7·08
Cachar	6,709	43	65	174	181	463	6 90
Total	20,010	98	193	332	1,068	1,776	8 87

* See table showing causes of deaths among non-Act coolies

The infant mortality in Nowgong is surprisingly heavy. The rates of mortality in Darrang, Sibságar, and Lakhimpur are all above the average, as also is the case in Kámrúp; but the small number of infants recorded in Nowgong and Kámrúp renders it unsafe to lay too much stress upon the high percentages of those districts.

35. Looking to the causes of infant mortality, it appears, as might have been expected, that deaths from cholera and dysentery are not, as in the case of adults, the most frequent; on the contrary, together they only cause 291 deaths, while to jungle fever 332 deaths are attributed, and to other causes 1,068. In adults, as has been shown, cholera and dysentery account for more than half of all the deaths.

36. The infant population at the beginning of the year was 18,642, on the 1st July 20,354, and on 31st December 21,036. Besides the births, amounting to 5,506, which have been already dealt with, 2,573 infants were imported and 3,601 were otherwise added (which means that they were brought by their parents when the latter changed their gardens). The deductions were 1,776 who died and 7,519 otherwise deducted (that is, who were taken away by their parents when they left their gardens). There was thus an increase of 2,394 to the infant population during the year. The births exceeded the deaths of infants by 3,730. The total birth-rate in respect to the entire adult coolie population, calculated on its average strength, is 4·6 per cent., and in respect to the entire population, including children and infants, is 3·1. These rates compare satisfactorily with the general birth-rate exhibited by Indian statistics. In the returns for 1877 the birth-rate in the North-West and the Central Provinces, where the highest figures were attained, and the returns are said to be more reliable than elsewhere, was 3·9 per cent. of population.

It must, moreover, be remembered that among the coolie population of Assam, as has been already stated, the population of females is below the usual standard, and a lower general birth-rate would accordingly be expected. It will be seen, however, from a comparison of the mortality returns in Section IV., that this birth-rate is insufficient to cover the yearly loss by deaths among the total coolie population.

37. It remains to consider the statistics relating to children from the age of 2 years to 16. A tabular statement is given, showing district by district the average number of

minors, the deaths which occurred, and the alleged causes of death and the percentage of deaths to average strength:—

Districts.	Average number of minors employed in 1878.	Deaths from					Percentage of deaths.
		Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Nowgong	588	19	15	16	54	104	17·68
Darrang	1,455	47	48	2	80	177	12·16
Sibságar	7,182	36	188	111	194	529	7·36
Lakhimpur	4,707	25	111	58	132	326	6·92
Kámrúp	181	.....	.....	4	2	6	3·31
Sylhet	2,519	.....	.....	.....	.....	75	2·97
Cachar	16,451	21	106	80	149	356	2·16
Total	33,083	148	468	271	611	1,573	4·75

* See table showing causes of deaths among non-Act coolies.

38. The districts are arranged in the order of their mortality. Here, again, it will be seen that the order is very similar to that of the order of mortality of infants and of adults. Kámrúp alone takes a different position, being now fifth in the list, otherwise the order remains the same. It is impossible not to recognise from these several lists of order of mortality, and the fact that Kámrúp alone varies its position, the fact that conclusions from these figures must not be pushed too far, and that percentages calculated upon small quantities must admit a very large element of chance or accident. For it is not at all probable that in Kámrúp alone, of all the districts of the Province, the relative healthiness should vary for adults, children, and infants.

39. The general average death-rate for children between the ages of 2 and 16 is 4·75 per cent. Nowgong shows the enormous mortality of 17·68, Darrang shows 12·16, Sibságar 7·36, and Lakhimpur 6·92, while Kámrúp, Sylhet, and Cachar are much below the average rate. In regard to the causes of death, the same remarks as were made when discussing the causes of death of infants may be repeated, *viz.*, that cholera and dysentery cause a much smaller proportionate number of deaths than in the case of adults.

40. Compared with last year, the general birth-rate calculated on the average strength of women is stationary, being 10·13 for both years. The death-rate of infants below 2 years of age is 8·87, as against 7·36 for 1877, and the death-rate for children is 4·75, as against 3·80 last year. Thus it will be seen that this year was for the infant as well as for the adult population more unhealthy than the previous year.

CHAPTER III.

DISTRICT DETAILS.

SYLHET.

THE labouring population at the beginning of the year consisted of 2,343 Act-VII. and 7,271 non-Act adults. During the year, 1,702 Act-VII and 1,694 non-Act labourers were imported. The strength at the end of the year was 2,786 Act-VII and 9,302 non-Act adults, or 12,088 in all, showing an increase of 2,474. Last year there were 1,440 Act-VII. and 975 non-Act coolies imported, and the labouring force was increased by 3,166 adults. In this respect, therefore, it would seem that the activity of the tea operations in Sylhet have been somewhat less than last year. The relative position of this district in respect of tea cultivation has been shown elsewhere to be about fifth among the seven tea districts of this Province.

2. Looking at the nationality of the labourers imported, there has been a notable increase only of importations from the North-West and Bengal. From Bengal there were received 418 labourers, as against 66 for 1877. The increase from Bengal is noteworthy, as generally in other districts importations from Bengal have decreased considerably this year. This district seems to be popular with Bengalis, as, perhaps, might naturally be expected.

3. The desertions in Sylhet have been exceptionally heavy, being on average strength 22·74 for Act-VII. and 14·99 for non-Act coolies, while the average for the Province is 7·78 and 5·18, respectively. The rates are also double the rates of desertion for 1877.

The rapidity at which desertion has increased in Sylhet is most noticeable. In 1875 the rate was, for Act-VII. coolies 2·97, in 1876 it was 5·75, and in 1877 11·66, while this year it is 22·74, thus nearly doubling itself each year.

An explanation of the greater frequency of desertions in Sylhet and Cachar has already been given in discussing desertions, and an attempt has also been made to explain why desertions have been more frequent this year than last year. A principal reason of the frequency of desertions in Sylhet is undoubtedly the comparative immunity with which desertion can be practised in that district. Thus, of 642 Act-VII. deserters, 32 only were punished, and of 1,281 other deserters 9 only were punished (under Act XIII. of 1859). The difficulty of arresting deserters in a populous district like Sylhet is very great, and, without the creation of a special detective police, but little can be accomplished in this direction, and it is doubtful whether this course would be advisable.

4. There was but little crime committed by labourers; only 85 labourers were convicted of offences, 41 of whom were convicted of desertion.

5. The mortality in Sylhet for adults was 8·11 for Act-VII. coolies, compared with 4·92 last year, and 4·93 for non-Act adults, compared with 2·59 last year. This increase in mortality has already been explained as due to the exceptional mortality among North-West Provinces coolies. It was relatively much greater among North-West Provinces men than women, being as 11·79 to 7·65. Of Act-VII. coolies from the North-West Provinces, 99 men died out of an average strength of 839 men, or 11·79 per cent., while 47 men died out of 812 Act-VII. men of all other nationalities, or 5·78 per cent. For women, the percentages, calculated in the same way, are 7·65 and 6·70. Among non-Act adults the remark is also true that North-Western Provinces labourers exhibit a much greater mortality than other classes, the rate being 7·03 compared to 3·22. The Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet had occasion to notice gangs of emaciated North-West Provinces immigrants passing through his district searching for employment, and the engagement of such men as local labourers must have helped to swell the mortality among non-Act coolies.

The mortality of infants in Sylhet was 7·08, and of children 2·97, compared with a general rate of 8·87 and 4·75 for the whole Province. Last year, the death-rates of infants and children were, for Sylhet 4·38 and 2·57, respectively.

6. The work of inspection was sufficiently performed during the year in this district. This work has been much facilitated by the opening of the new sub-divisions.

7. There was a notably high rate of mortality in the first half of the year in Kewacherra, Chandpur, and Rajnagar gardens, it being 18·04, 11·6, and 8·56, respectively. In the second half of the year the mortality in Kewacherra fell to 6·1, and in Rajnagar to 3·11. But the mortality in Chandpur continued very high, being 11·85. Inquiries are in progress concerning the advisability of closing this garden.

The death-rate at Nooncherra, which had been 4·53 for the first half of the year, rose to 8·13 for the second half. This garden and Kewacherra will be carefully watched.

It is not known to what extent imported labourers have begun to settle in Sylhet.

CACHAR.

8. In the district of Cachar there has been an increase in the number of Act-VII labourers imported during the year, which was 6,454 for 1878 and 5,853 for 1877.

At the beginning of the year there were—

Act-VII.	13,888
Non-Act adults	29,861

Importations were—

Act-VII.	6,454
Non-Act adults	850

The numbers at the end of the year were—

Act-VII.	12,128
Non-Act adults	29,240

There has thus been a nett reduction in the numbers of Act-VII. labourers by 1,760, and of non-Act by 621. Local labour may perhaps have supplied this deficiency.

9. In regard to importations, there has been an increase of 34 per cent. in the importations of coolies from the North-West, and of 86 per cent. in importations from Chota Nagpur. On the other hand, recruits from Bengal have diminished by 45 per cent. and Madras importations have practically ceased. The labouring population of Cachar is far

larger than that of any other district in the Province, being over 41,000, the next highest being Sibságar, with about 31,000.

10. The area under tea in Cachar is said to be 42,199 acres, and the next district in this respect is Sibságar, with 34,194. Thus, in point of view of its importance as a tea-producing district, Cachar stands a long way in advance of all the other districts of this Province.

11. The desertions were 13·83 for Act-VII. coolies and 5·66 for non-Act coolies this year, against 8·11 and 3·93 last year; thus showing a considerable increase, but not so large an increase as Sylhet shows. It is deserving of notice to what an extent desertion is prevalent among men under Act VII. from the North-West Provinces in this district and in that of Sylhet. Last year, 31·11 per cent. of this class deserted in Cachar, and this year 44·8 per cent. In Sylhet, for the same class, *viz.*, men only under Act VII. from the North-West Provinces, it was 45·05 per cent. Nothing, however, need be added here to the remarks already made on this subject.

12. The mortality in Cachar was 9·43 for Act-VII. coolies this year, and 4·91 last year, and for non-Act coolies 3·28 and 1·90, respectively, or nearly double in both classes. Both these rates were below the average for the Province. Among North-West Provinces coolies, however, the mortality was appallingly great, amounting to 20·24 per cent. on average strength for men, and to 19·01 for women.

Combining desertions and deaths together, it therefore appears in the case of North-West Provinces coolies that out of every 100 coolies of this class in the district during the year, 65 either died or ran away.

The death-rate of children was 2·16, while the Provincial average was 4·75, and for infants 6·90 against 8·05 for the whole Province. Last year, the death-rates of children and infants were 2·92 and 5 74.

13. The duty of inspecting has been adequately performed within the year by the district authorities.

14. The gardens which were notably unhealthy last year were Goomra-Jelalpur, Goabari and Ataicherra. Goomra-Jelalpur was inspected during the year five times, and a committee was held upon it. The committee accepted the proposals of the Inspector, and directed a reduction of the scale of tasks, as being too high for this garden. Many improvements have also been introduced. Some of the lines have been altered, and some Norton's tube-wells have been sunk, which at the time of the last Report, 1878, were working well. The health of the garden has much improved, and fell to 3·70 for the first half of the year. At Goabari the health of the coolies has improved, but the death-rate is still high, being 9·61 for the year. Unless this garden shows signs of further improvement, steps must be taken to close it. On Ataicherra garden the death-rate is extremely high, 18·81. This is due to the importation of a large number of North-West Provinces coolies, who on their first importation have never done well on this garden. Steps are now being taken to close it to unacclimatised North-West Provinces coolies.

15. The Deputy-Commissioner gives a list of 30 gardens, all with a death-rate of over 7·0 per cent., and points out that they are almost all situated along the foot of the North Cachar Hills, where they are exposed to cold and malarious winds from the gorges. A few are in a cluster near the Badri and Madura rivers, and one or two are detached gardens far from the cultivated parts of the district. He proposes to close all the gardens within the zone thus indicated to North-West Province coolies. It is quite certain, as a result of many years' experience, that North-West Province coolies do not, as newly-imported coolies, thrive on these gardens so well as Chota Nagpur coolies. This may be due, in a large measure, to the different manner of living and of habits among these two classes; and, doubtless, the hilly jungles of Chota Nagpur more closely resemble this part of Cachar than the cultivated plains of the North-West. But, whatever the cause, the fact is too well verified to be capable of dispute. The Chief Commissioner, however, considers that each garden must be considered on its own merits, and believes that the mortality of the present year will prove to be quite exceptional, and will not recur. One garden, the worst, with a mortality of 26·56, has been closed to unacclimatised North-West Provinces coolies. Some of the other gardens do not employ Act-VII. labourers at all, and on others the mortality is clearly exceptional. These gardens will, however, be watched, and, though the Chief Commissioner hopes it may not be necessary to close many of them, still, if the mortality does not diminish, proper steps will be taken. Many of the gardens named employ only free labour, and on these no special action is possible under the existing law.

KAMRUP.

16. There are only 234 Act-VII. and 172 non-Act labourers in this district. The importations during the year were 70 and 104, respectively.

17. The mortality in this district was comparatively low, owing, as has been said, to the importations of North-West Provinces coolies being so few.

The death-rates on the Luri, Sonapur, and Kamarkusi gardens were high last year, being on the Luri garden 13 15, on the Sonapur garden 11·59, and on the Kamarkusi 10·0; but during the current year no deaths have occurred on these gardens.

This year two other gardens, Bordooar and Kurkuria, show the high death-rates of 14·28 and 13·72. These rates are exceptional, and do not seem to point to confirmed unhealthiness of these gardens, which will, however, be carefully watched.

DARRANG.

18. In this district there were 4,656 Act-VII. and 4,449 non-Act adult labourers at the end of the year, which is a considerable increase on the numbers of last year. The importations were 2,777 Act-VII. and 211 non-Act coolies, about 800 more Act-VII. coolies being imported than last year.

19. The desertions of Act-VII. coolies show an increase over last year, being as 5·00 to 3·93. The desertions of non-Act coolies show a very considerable decrease, being as 2·12 to 6·60. In both classes the rate is below the average for the Province. The desertions were specially heavy among the North-West Provinces coolies. The births are somewhat below the average of the Province, and are as 7·04 to 10·13.

20. The mortality in Darrang was above the average for the Province, being 9·64 to 6·75. This district stands second in the Province in point of mortality. The exceptional mortality seems to have been almost wholly confined to the Act-VII. coolies, among whom it is 14·10 per cent., compared with 11·42 last year. Among non-Act coolies, the increase of mortality is but slight, *viz.*, 4·51 to 4·01. The mortality of children and infants is also exceptionally high, much above the average of the Province, being as 12·16 to an average of 4·75 for children and 13 06 to 8·87 for infants. Not only was the exceptional death-rate confined to Act-VII. coolies, but it was disproportionately heavy among the North-West Province coolies of this class, being as high as 24 per cent. for the men and 29 per cent. for the women. The general mortality was largely due to cholera, 231 out of 643 deaths being assigned to this cause.

21. The duty of inspection has been thoroughly performed; every garden employing Act-VII. labourers having been visited.

22. The gardens which showed exceptional mortality last year were—

Paniputa.—On this garden the death-rate had fallen to 2·07 and 3·12 for Act-VII. and non-Act coolies respectively in the last half of 1878.

Kosubeel, which had improved last year, has still further improved this year. The percentage of mortality here is now only 4·50.

Gronland garden was fully reported on in last year's report. The result of the improvements carried out has been most satisfactory, the death-rate being only 3·37 for 1878, the sick and weakly coolies have been transferred to other healthier gardens of the Company; this garden was inspected four times during the year. In his last report, Mr. Driberg writes as follows:—"I found the place remarkably neat and clean, no jungle whatever, the drainage I ascertained at my August inspection to be good. Besides the qualified Native Doctor, the Company have now got a European medical man, and well-water (Norton's tube-wells) is now used by the coolies; in fact, I may say that all the orders and suggestions of Dr. Garden, which he gave in April, have been carried out, and, judging from the present state of the garden, I think it may be removed from special observation."

Kherkeria, where last year the mortality was as heavy as 27·9 for Act-VII. and 36 6 for other labourers, this year shows an enormous improvement. This garden was specially inspected by the Deputy-Commissioner, Colonel Sherer, and Dr. Garden. The mortality during the first and second half-years was 1·25 and 1·35, respectively. The plan has been resorted to of only sending acclimatized coolies to the garden, and of removing all sickly ones before their diseases have advanced too far, and this has prevented the recurrence of the heavy mortality of 1877.

Diplonga.—The improvement on this garden is very marked, instead of a mortality of 24·2 and 22·7 for Act-VII. and other coolies, this year there were but 3 deaths,—2 from cholera and 1 from dysentery.

Kolapáni.—The death-rate on this garden last year was 32·3 and 18·8 for Act-VII. and other coolies respectively. It is satisfactory to note the improvement which has taken place. The mortality for the first half was very high, being 14·06, but during the second half it came down to 4·33. Of the 51 deaths that occurred during the year, 30 were due to cholera alone and 15 to dysentery.

23. The following gardens show an exceptionally high rate of mortality during the second half of 1878 :—

Burkola	14·86
Gellahating	14·42
Sadharughope	14·12
Rontholi	13·79
Portabgurh	13·39

Burkola.—The mortality on this garden during the first half of 1878 was much higher, being 21·73 per cent. The unhealthiness of the site on which the lines are built, and an outbreak of cholera, were the causes of this high rate of mortality. This garden has been placed under observation, and a special report on it is expected.

Gellahating.—During the first half year the mortality was only 6·49 per cent. The manager of this garden complained to the Assistant-Inspector at the time of the second half-yearly inspection that his Calcutta Agents sent up very inferior batches of coolies. This garden has a large number of labourers, and is well managed. The deaths from cholera, jungle fever, and dysentery alone amounted to 38, 6, and 9, respectively. The inspecting officer could find no fault with any of the arrangements on this garden.

Sadharughope.—On this garden, the mortality during the first and second half of 1878 was almost the same, being 14·37 and 14·12, respectively. No less than 51 deaths were from cholera alone.

Rontholi.—This garden imported labourers for the first time during this year. The percentage of deaths are calculated on a small average. The garden will be watched during 1879.

Parbutghur.—The manager of this garden also complained of having received an inferior type of coolie during the second half of 1878. The death-rate during the first half was only 4·07. The deaths from cholera and dysentery alone were 9 and 28, respectively. The inspecting officer found no fault with the arrangements on this garden.

It is said that 504 acres of land have been taken up in the year for ordinary cultivation by time-expired coolies. This is certainly satisfactory, and shows that a certain proportion of immigrants are willing to adopt this district as their permanent home.

NOWGONG.

24. There has been a considerable increase in the number of Act-VII. coolies of this district during the year. There were 977 at the beginning of the year, 1,554 were imported and 1,792 remained at the end of the year, which gives an increase of nearly 100 per cent. For non-Act adult coolies the similar figures given are 1,234, 80, and 1,476, respectively, a comparatively small increase.

25. As has been said, Nowgong, of all districts, shows by far the greatest activity in importations of Act-VII. coolies. It is to this cause that the very high rate of mortality, the highest in the Province, must be attributed. The percentage of mortality on all adult strength is 11·09. Amongst Act-VII. coolies the rate is 16·62 this year, and was 8·92 last year. For non-Act adults it is 5·27, compared with 5·50 last year, which is a slight decrease.

Local labour is largely employed, only 25 out of 93 gardens employing imported coolies. This local labour consists, principally, of Kacharies brought in from Kámrúp and Goálpára, and partly of other indigenous tribes of the district. A certain amount of free immigration takes place both of persons seeking other employments as well as garden labour, but it is not noticeably increasing.

Of the twenty-five gardens employing Act-VII. coolies, five were only newly opened, seventeen were visited during the year, and the remaining three in January last, after the close of the period of report.

26. The gardens which showed exceptional mortality last year were Solonah and Balijura, but this was due to an outbreak of cholera. This year, the mortality has not been excessive on these gardens.

27. This year the gardens with an excessive mortality are—

	First half	Second half.
Udmari	.....	14·6
Kuhkusi	6·9	14·4
Mjaikhal	11·1	12·5
Sekoni	14·1	10·7

Nearly two-thirds of the deaths on these gardens are due to cholera.

SIBSÁGAR.

28. In Sibságar at the beginning of the year there were 13,679 Act-VII. coolies, and at the end of the year 15,030: and 7,699 coolies were imported. Of non-Act adults there were 14,441 at the beginning, and 16,715 at the end of the year; and 904 were imported. There is a notable increase, from 227 to 904, in the importations of non-Act coolies. This is satisfactory. The increase in the importation of non-Act coolies is probably a sign of the increased popularity of this district among the immigrants.

29. The mortality in Sibságar was very high; it stood third in this respect among the other districts of Assam. The mortality among the Act-VII. coolies is 11·17, while for non-Act adults it is 4·38. This shows a slight increase over last year's figures. The mortality was exceptionally high among the coolies from the North-Western Provinces, being 15 per cent. among Act-VII. coolies. The mortality among the Madrasi coolies in this district, though still high, has fallen very considerably.

30. None of the gardens which were noted for their exceptional mortality last year show any exceptional mortality in the present year. The gardens which have to be noted in Sibságar this year are—

	First half.	Second half.
Karikatia	7·48	18·22
Laojan	8 65	20·74
Dhansiri	.....	20·32
Dibrapar	.....	12·32

The high death-rates in the Karikatia, Laojan, and Dibrapar gardens are said to be due to the inferior type of coolies imported during the year. The deaths in the Dhansiri garden were nearly all due to cholera, of which disease 17 Act-VII. coolies and 3 non-Act coolies died during the year.

31. Inspection has been much better performed in the district this year than in the preceding.

32. It is satisfactory to note that 519 acres of land for ordinary cultivation have been taken up by time-expired coolies.

LAKHIMPUR.

33. In Lakhimpur there were 11,594 Act-VII. coolies at the beginning and 13,304 at the end of the year, and 7,106 were imported. Of non-Act coolie adults there were 7,363 at the beginning, 9,996 at the end of the year, and 984 were imported. There was a considerable increase, from 5,700 to 7,106, in the importations of Act-VII. coolies, and a still more marked increase in non-Act adults, from 173 to 984. In Lakhimpur, the number of Act-VII. coolies greatly exceeds the number of non-Act coolies, and it is satisfactory to note that the number of non-Act coolies is rapidly increasing.

34. In respect to mortality, Lakhimpur stands fourth among the districts of Assam. In Lakhimpur, the mortality among the Act-VII. coolies this year is 9·95, against 8·89 of the previous year, and among the non-Act coolies 3·57 against 3·18. This shows a slight increase in mortality during the year under report.

The mortality among the coolies from the North-West Provinces is also very high in Lakhimpur, being 16·5 per cent. The mortality among the Madrassi coolies has fallen considerably.

35. None of the tea-gardens which showed high mortality last year show any considerable mortality this year.

This year the following gardens show high rates of mortality:—

	First half.	Second half.
Hilladary	18·47	20·00
Chowba	.....	15·11
Kahung	.....	14·83
Timonah	.....	14·63

In the Hilladary garden a batch of contractors' coolies arrived all ill on the factory. In the rest of the gardens the mortality has been attributed to the inferior type of coolies received, most of whom are said to have been extremely weak on their arrival.

36. The Inspector of Labourers writes that in the Talup garden the deaths for the second half of 1878 were a total of 71, but of this number upwards of 35 arrived ill and in an almost moribund state, and were placed by him under the provisions of Section 110 of the Act, and this reduced the mortality on the Talup garden to 3·96 per cent. The Inspector says "If I could induce all managers to do the same, I feel certain the returns

would show that, eliminating those coolies who arrive ill and almost dying on the garden, the death-rate up here would compare most favourably with other parts of India."

37. Inspection has not been so well carried out during the year in Lakhimpur as last year.

38. Only 33 acres of land for ordinary cultivation have been taken up by time-expired labourers in Lakhimpur. On the other hand, the cultivation of rice and other food-staples by garden labour, in view of the high price of food, is noticed by the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Accommodation of labourers and their treatment

The reports received from the several Inspectors in this Province show that continued care and attention is paid by the managers of tea-gardens in providing good accommodation for their labourers. Favourable reports are received from all districts on this point, and the greatest willingness is generally shown in carrying out suggestions of improvements for the health and comfort of the coolies. Nearly every garden is provided with a native medical attendant, and the larger number of gardens are under the supervision of European doctors. The labourers are, generally speaking, contented, and few complaints are made to the Inspectors. The large desertion in some districts by no means disproves this conclusion, as it has been shown to be due in a large measure to the desire to gain a bonus on re-employment.

2. The Chief Commissioner, however, regrets to notice a case, which the Deputy-Commissioner reported specially, of want of humanity displayed by the manager of a garden far removed from all communication with the cultivated parts of the district towards a time-expired coolie, who was turned out of the lines on her refusing to renew her agreement, and who, but for the generosity of some of the constables in a neighbouring guard, must have inevitably starved. Although the manager was ultimately acquitted by the Judge, and the Chief Commissioner thinks rightly so, of having committed an offence punishable under the Penal Code, such conduct is manifestly none the less disgraceful, but, the Chief Commissioner is glad to believe, is of very rare occurrence among the planting community.

3. Another case which occurred in the district of Lakhimpur must also be recorded:—

A number of coolies absconded from the Balipara tea-plantation in the North Lakhimpur sub-division, and proceeded towards the sub-divisional station for the purpose of laying their grievances before the Magistrate. The European Assistant in charge of the garden pursued and overtook them and endeavoured to induce them to return. In the altercation which ensued, he struck one of the coolies a blow on the head from a heavy walking-staff he carried, from which blow the coolie died in a few hours. The European Assistant was subsequently tried in Calcutta and sentenced to 15 months' rigorous imprisonment.

Offences of labourers

4. The offences committed by labourers are extremely few. The most common offence was desertion, for which 159 only were punished, though there were as many as 7,515 cases of desertion. Only 20 persons were punished for theft, and 6 for receiving stolen property. Thirteen persons were guilty of being members of an unlawful assembly, and 14 were convicted of rioting. Considering the large labouring population, this is certainly not a long tale of offences. It has sometimes happened that Magistrates in the recruiting districts have prevented recruits who were noted bad characters from emigrating to this Province, but it is still probable that not a few who have been driven in their own countries to make their living by stealing have come to this Province. There seems to be little danger from this source, as, besides the deterrent effect of the discipline of a garden and the opportunity of earning an honest living, the opportunities for systematic theft are naturally much smaller in the case of an alien than of a man in his own country.

Settlement within the Province.

5 It is difficult to ascertain to what extent imported labourers settle down to ordinary cultivation in this Province. From the reports of Deputy-Commissioners, it appears that 504 acres were taken up by time-expired coolies in Darrang and 519 in Sibságar. In Nowgong only 3 acres

are said to have been so taken up, and in Lakhimpur 33. In Sylhet and Cachar it is more difficult to obtain any figures on this subject, as the revenue system of these districts is different from that in the former districts. But there seems reason to believe that a good many labourers settle down to ordinary cultivation.

Fitness of certain classes of labourers as immigrants.

6. As has been already stated, there seems no reason to assert the special unfitness of any class of labourer, whether from the North-West or Madras or elsewhere, to settle as labourers in this Province. Very favourable reports, indeed, are given of both Madrasees and North-West coolies by managers who have had to deal with large numbers of these people. Opinions are much divided as to the class of labourer best suited for Assam, but perhaps the most general opinion is that the Chota Nagpur, or, as they are termed, the "jungly" coolies, are best suited for work on out-of-the-way gardens distant from ordinary cultivation. North-West coolies and Madras coolies, on the other hand, certainly thrive much best on gardens situated near large bazars and extended cultivation. They would seem to be less handy at improvising and at obtaining comforts for themselves under difficulties than the jungly coolies, and seem to be more out of their element when far removed from civilisation. They are a more saving people, generally speaking, than the Chota Nagpur coolies, and are of the two races the more inclined to underfeed themselves when food is dear. Both classes will readily settle down, and under conditions which suit them are hard-working, reliable workmen. Perhaps of the two classes, to a manager who does not understand the treatment of coolies, the North-West coolies will appear the most troublesome, as having more caste prejudices and as knowing better how to assert themselves.

Sanitary improvements.

7. In last year's Report it was said that the very valuable remarks made by Dr. DeRenzy in his Sanitary Report of 1877 on the subject of the importance of a pure water-supply would be brought as far as possible to the notice of managers. This was done, and the Chief Commissioner is happy to observe that it appears to have been not without good results. This year, again, the Deputy-Surgeon-General has been led, as a result of his inspection of a few gardens, to discuss at some length the subject of the proper food for labourers, and of the importance of supplying other sorts of food besides rice. These remarks, which are contained in Section IV. of the Annual Sanitary Report for Assam for 1878, paras. 1 to 18, and further remarks on the subject of procuring a supply of pure water, paras. 38-42, will be also circulated as widely as possible among tea-planters in this Province. The remarks are most valuable, and are deserving of most careful attention, indicating, as they do, the two main means by which the general health of the labouring population may be best secured. Special importance is attached by the Chief Commissioner to the remarks which point out the importance of securing ample provision of all the necessary kinds of food in out-of-the-way and newly-opened gardens, and of taking special care that newly-imported coolies, amongst whom the mortality is so heavy, should be amply supplied with every necessary for a sufficient diet.

Free immigration and local labour.

Already, the subject of free labour and free immigration has been dealt with in the body of this report. The Chief Commissioner would only add that, though there are signs of a satisfactory increase of the supply of free labour, both local and by means of free immigration, still it will be long before this source of labour will be sufficient to replace contract labour.

Conclusion.

The tea industry, as is shown by the increased importations and the extension of cultivation, shows a very satisfactory activity, and seems to be established on a sound and firm footing. The Chief Commissioner regrets that it has not been possible as yet to reduce materially the cost of the importation of labour, but he is still hopeful that much may be effected in this respect in the future.

The relations between District Officers and tea-planters have, on the whole, been satisfactory during the year, and the Chief Commissioner is satisfied that, so far as the management and care of labourers is concerned, the tea industry of the Province is in a healthy and steadily improving condition.

RETURNS.

Return showing the Statistics for the Total Immigrant Population of the Province of Assam during the year 1878.

1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		15		16	17
			Additions made during the year 1878.					Deductions made during the year 1878.						Percentage of deaths to		Percentages of desertions to			
Classes of Labourers.		Number remaining at the end of last year, 1877	Imported.	Received from other gardens.	Otherwise added.	Total added.	Total of columns 2 and 6.	Died.	Deserted.	Otherwise deducted.	Total deducted.	Number remaining at the end of the year 1878.	Strength on the 1st July, 1878.	Actual strength (less received from other gardens)	Average strength	Actual strength (less received from other gardens).	Average strength.	Actual strength (less received from other gardens).	Average strength.
Sylhet	Act-VII. labourers (adults)	2,849	1,702	129	37	1,868	4,211	229	612	554	1,425	2,786	3,328	5·60	8·11	15·73	22·74	4,082	2,822
	Non-Act labourers: Adults	7,271*	1,694	1,871	4,699	8,204	15,475	422	1,281	4,470	6,173	9,302	9,909	3·18	4·38	9·37	14·99	12,664	8,544
	Non-Act labourers: Children	2,148*	566	231	818	1,615	3,763	75	221	698	994	2,769	2,641	2·12	2·97	6·25	8·77	3,632	2,819
	Non-Act labourers: Infants†	978*	205	115	725	1,045	2,023	85	87	418	590	*1,363	1,209	4·45	7·08	4·55	7·25	1,308	1,200
	Total	12,740	4,167	2,286	6,279	12,732	25,472	811	2,251	6,210	9,252	16,220	16,297	3·49	5·37	9·62	14·78	23,184	15,085
Cachar	Act VII. labourers (adults)	13,888	6,454	780	192	7,427	21,315	1,278	1,874	6,035	9,187	12,128	14,622	6·22	9·43	9·12	13·83	20,535	13,546
	Non Act labourers: Adults	29,861	850	690	18,130	19,670	49,531	975	1,680	17,636	20,291	29,240	29,902	1·99	3·28	3·48	5·66	48,841	29,688
	Non Act labourers: Children	14,390	2,389	218	6,405	9,007	23,397	356	612	4,614	5,582	17,815	17,046	1·03	2·16	2·63	3·72	23,184	16,481
	Non Act labourers: Infants†	7,141	251	45	3,952	4,248	11,389	463	416	4,168	5,047	6,342	6,644	4·08	6·90	3·66	6·20	11,344	6,709
	Total	65,280	9,944	1,728	28,680	40,352	105,632	3,072	4,582	32,353	40,007	65,625	68,214	2·95	4·62	4·40	6·90	103,904	66,373
Kamrup	Act-VII. labourers (adults)	204	70	17	12	99	303	17	13	39	69	234	228	5·94	7·32	4·54	5·60	286	232
	Non Act labourers: Adults	466	104	43	122	269	735	18	44	201	263	472	557	2·60	3·61	6·35	8·48	692	498
	Non Act labourers: Children	105	22	8	72	102	257	6	2	46	54	203	185	2·40	3·31	0·80	1·10	249	181
	Non Act labourers: Infants†	47	5	....	24	29	76	6	....	21	27	49	67	7·89	11·11	.....	.....	76	54
	Total	872	201	68	230	499	1,371	47	57	307	413	958	1,067	3·70	4·87	4·37	5·90	1,303	965
Darrang	Act-VII labourers (adults)	4,080	2,777	88	54	2,919	6,999	643	228	1,472	2,343	4,656	4,939	9·20	14·10	3·00	5·00	6,911	4,558
	Non-Act labourers: Adults	3,177	211	302	2,360	2,873	6,050	179	84	1,338	1,601	4,449	4,248	3·11	4·41	1·46	2·12	5,748	3,962
	Non-Act labourers: Children	1,157	596	114	299	1,009	2,166	177	9	365	551	1,615	1,394	8·62	12·16	0·43	0·61	2,052	1,455
	Non-Act labourers: Infants†	756	368	23	367	758	1,514	137	3	95	235	1,279	1,113	9·18	13·06	0·20	0·28	1,491	1,049
	Total	9,170	3,952	527	3,080	7,559	16,729	1,136	324	3,270	4,730	11,999	11,904	7·01	10·30	1·29	2·93	16,202	11,024
Nowgong	Act-VII labourers (adults)	977	1,554	51	20	1,625	2,602	239	160	411	810	1,792	1,543	9·36	16·62	6·27	11·12	2,561	1,437
	Non Act labourers: Adults	1,234	80	....	1,078	1,158	2,392	72	41	803	916	1,476	1,289	3·01	5·27	1·71	3·00	2,392	1,366
	Non Act labourers: Children	404	495	....	228	723	1,127	104	21	222	347	780	579	9·22	17·68	1·86	3·57	1,127	688
	Non Act labourers: Infants†	232	117	....	91	208	440	52	....	96	148	292	280	11·81	20·71	.....	....	440	251
	Total	2,847	2,246	51	1,417	3,714	6,561	467	222	1,532	2,221	4,340	3,741	7·17	12·81	3·41	6·09	6,510	3,643
Sibsagar	Act-VII labourers (adults)	13,679	7,699	509	78	8,286	21,965	1,702	535	4,698	6,935	15,030	16,964	7·93	11·17	2·49	3·51	21,456	15,224
	Non-Act labourers: Adults	14,441	904	590	5,760	7,254	21,695	691	299	3,990	4,980	16,715	16,109	3·27	4·28	1·41	1·89	21,105	15,756
	Non-Act labourers: Children	6,018	1,945	167	1,155	3,267	9,285	529	35	949	1,513	7,772	7,756	6·60	7·36	0·38	0·48	9,118	7,182
	Non-Act labourers: Infants†	6,438	958	105	1,928	2,971	9,409	751	..	837	1,588	7,821	7,484	8·07	10·36	.....	....	9,304	7,248
	Total	40,576	11,486	1,371	8,921	21,778	62,354	3,673	869	10,474	15,016	47,338	48,313	6·02	8·68	1·42	1·91	60,983	45,410
Lakhimpur	Act VII. labourers (adults)	11,594	7,106	289	109	7,504	19,098	1,228	502	4,004	5,734	13,364	13,951	6·24	9·05	2·66	3·87	18,809	12,948
	Non-Act labourers: Adults	7,363	984	480	4,379	5,843	13,206	319	132	2,759	3,210	9,996	9,482	2·30	3·37	1·03	1·47	12,776	8,920
	Non-Act labourers: Children	3,582	2,286	124	756	3,166	6,748	326	85	821	1,232	5,516	4,893	4·22	6·92	0·34	1·16	6,624	4,707
	Non-Act labourers: Infants†	3,050	689	64	965	1,718	4,768	262	..	596	878	3,890	3,557	5·59	8·05	....	..	4,704	3,499
	Total	25,589	11,065	957	6,209	18,231	43,820	2,215	689	8,180	11,684	32,736	31,883	5·16	7·36	1·69	2·29	42,863	30,069
Total	Act VII. labourers (adults)	46,765	27,362	1,463	503	29,728	76,493	5,396	3,454	17,213	26,563	49,930	55,595	7·23	10·57	5·29	7·78	74,630	50,763
	Non Act labourers: Adults	63,812	4,827	3,216	36,528	45,271	109,084	2,676	3,561	31,197	37,434	71,650	70,676	2·54	3·49	3·76	5·18	105,165	68,712
	Non Act labourers: Children	27,854	8,299	847	9,733	18,879	46,743	1,573	955	7,615	10,143	36,600	31,794	5·42	7·75	5·06	2·88	45,886	33,083
	Non Act labourers: Infants†	18,642	2,573	352	8,052	10,977	29,619	1,776	506	6,301	8,583	21,036	20,354	6·06	8·27	1·73	2·52	29,267	20,010
	Grand Total	157,074	43,061	6,938	54,816	104,865	261,939	11,421	8,976	62,326	82,723	179,216	181,419	4·47	6·61	3·52	5·20	254,951	172,568

* The difference is owing to non receipt for 1878 of returns from some gardens employing only non Act coolies.

† Inclusive of infants born in the Province.

DIVISIONAL RETURN No. 25 OF 1878.

Return of Imported Labourers on Contracts under Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873, for the year ending 31st December, 1878.

Sex	Locality of Birthplace.	Number remaining on the books at the end of last year, 1877.	Number placed on the books during the year 1878. Imported. By contractors.	By gardens-sirdars.	Received from other gardens.	Returned from imprisonment.	Apprehended as deserters.	Total added during the year 1878, or total of columns 4 to 8.	Total number of labourers, or total of columns 3 and 9.	Number removed from the books during the year 1878. Transferred to other gardens.	By permanent indentures under Section 112.	By determination of contract under Section 130	By redemption under Section 137	By cancelment under Sections 130 and 124.	Died.	Imprisoned.	Deserted.	Total deducted during the year 1878, or total of columns 11 to 18.	Number remaining on the books at the end of the year 1878.	Strength on the 1st July, 1878.	Average strength.—Average of the labourers employed on the 1st of January and July, and on the 31st December, 1878	Actual strength.—Total number of Act VII labourers, less received from other gardens.	Percentage of deaths to Average strength.	Actual strength.	Percentage of desertions to Average strength.	Actual strength.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Men	(1) Bengal	9,008	944	2,003	293	55	46	3,341	12,349	283	50	2,889	61	3	593	59	631	4,569	7,780	8,910	8,566	12,056	6·92	4·91	7·36	5·23	
	(2) N. W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	4,346	1,130	2,752	298	59	81	4,320	8,666	337	130	1,122	12	5	853	87	1,365	3,911	4,755	5,912	5,005	8,368	17·04	10·19	27·27	16·31	
	(3) Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia	11,009	1,997	6,654	405	71	72	9,179	20,188	405	77	3,126	22	20	1,293	93	923	5,959	14,229	14,864	13,267	19,783	9·67	6·53	6·90	4·66	
	(4) Nepal	4	10	3	.....	.....	.....	13	17	....	....	7	....	....	3	....	2	12	5	9	6	17	50·00	17·64	3·33	11·76	
	(5) Madras	697*	73	27	87	4	.....	191	888	87	23	144	....	....	69	3	42	368	520	628	615	801	11·21	8·61	6·82	5·11	* Difference with the figures of the previous year owing to Sylhet having erroneously shown Madras coolies against Bombay.
	(6) Bombay	45†	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	....	45	....	....	....	....	....	3	....	9	12	33	28	39	45	7·69	6·66	23·07	20·00	† Ditto ditto Bombay coolies against Madras.
	Total	25,109	4,154	11,419	1,083	189	199	17,044	42,153	1,112	280	7,288	95	28	2,814	242	2,972	14,831	27,322	30,562	27,198	41,070	1·19	6·85	10·76	7·23	
Women	(1) Bengal	9,417	992	1,582	216	21	25	2,836	12,253	212	33	3,099	62	6	690	31	410	4,543	7,710	9,041	8,722	12,027	7·91	5·73	4·70	3·40	
	(2) N. W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	3,329	823	1,946	180	13	23	2,985	6,311	195	84	1,264	22	4	677	14	366	2,626	3,688	4,439	3,819	6,134	17·73	11·03	9·58	9·96	
	(3) Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia	8,017	1,380	5,012	356	19	14	6,781	15,398	356	52	2,613	23	10	1,173	9	199	4,435	10,963	11,452	10,244	15,042	11·38	7·79	1·92	1·32	
	(4) Nepal	3	9	1	.....	.....	.....	10	13	....	....	8	....	....	4	....	....	12	1	1	2	13	200·00	30·76	....	....	
	(5) Madras	274	32	12	28	.....	.....	72	346	28	10	32	....	....	37	1	8	115	233	286	264	318	14·01	11·63	1·89	1·57	
	(6) Bombay	16	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	....	16	....	....	....	....	....	1	....	2	3	13	14	14	16	7·14	6·25	14·28	12·50	
	Total	21,656	3,236	8,553	780	53	62	12,684	34,340	791	179	7,016	107	20	2,582	55	983	11,732	22,608	25,234	23,165	33,560	11·14	7·69	4·23	2·92	
	Grand Total	46,765	7,390	19,972	1,863	242	261	29,728	76,493	1,903	459	14,304	202	48	5,396	297	3,954	26,563	49,930	55,595	50,763	74,630	10·62	7·23	7·78	5·29	

DIVISIONAL RETURN NO 26 OF 1878.

PART I.—*Return of Imported Labourers not on Contracts under Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873, for the year ending 31st December, 1878.*

Age.	Sex.	Locality of Birthplace.	Number remaining at the end of last year, 1877	Additions during the year 1878. Imported direct.	Otherwise than by importation. Received from other gardens	Re-engaged on expiry of contract.	Otherwise obtained.	By transfer to adults from minors and to minors from infants.	Total added during the year 1878, or total of columns 5 to 9.	Total of columns 4 and 10.	Deductions during the year 1878. Transferred to other gardens.	Left the garden with permission.	Left the garden without permission.	Died.	By transfer from minors to adults and from infants to minors.	Total deducted during the year 1878, or total of columns 12 to 16.	Number remaining at the end of year 1878.	Strength on the 1st July, 1878.	Average strength.—Average of the labourers employed on the 1st January and July, and on the 31st of December, 1878.	Actual strength.—Total number of non-Act labourers, less received from other gardens	Percentage of deaths to Average strength.	Percentage of deaths to Actual strength.	Percentage of desertions to Average strength.	Percentage of desertions to Actual strength.
1	2	3	4*	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Adults	Men	(1) Bengal	14,258	624	471	5,540	2,270	146	9,051	23,309	340	5,832	628	417	....	7,217	16 092	15,782	15,377	22,838	2·71	1·82	4·08	2 74
		(2) N W Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	9,265	1,023	848	3,125	2,456	84	7,536	16,801	387	5,337	1,048	559	....	7,331	9 470	9,734	9,489	15,953	5·89	3·49	11·04	6 50
		(3) Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia.	10,906	1,097	865	4,218	1,792	240	8,212	19,118	514	4,406	521	517	...	5,958	13,160	13,001	12,355	18,253	4 18	2·83	4·21	2·85
		(4) Nepal	41	....	2	17	17	....	36	77	2	28	9	....	...	39	38	47	43	75	...	....	20 93	12·00
		(5) Madras	282	29	20	106	59	1	215	497	3	159	23	10	....	195	302	345	310	477	3·22	2·09	7 41	4·82
		Total	34 752	2,773	2,206	13,006	6,594	471	25 050	59,802	1,246	15 762	2,229	1,503	...	20,740	39 062	38 909	37,574	57,696	4·06	2·61	5·93	3·87
	Women	(1) Bengal	13,036	481	451	4,535	2,110	174	7,751	20,787	323	5,494	518	368	....	6 703	14,084	13,690	13 604	20,336	2 70	1 89	3 80	2 54
		(2) N W Provinces, Oudh, and Behar,	6,742	745	516	2,012	1,618	64	4,955	11,697	304	3,809	500	349	...	4,962	6,735	6,947	6,808	11,181	5 12	3 12	7 34	4 47
		(3) Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia.	9,074	812	731	4,222	1,491	146	7,402	16,476	504	3,671	309	450	....	4,934	11,542	10,888	10,501	15,745	4·28	2·85	2 94	1·96
		(4) Nepal	15	....	....	1	5	....	6	21	....	7	2	...	....	9	12	12	13	21	....	....	15 38	9 53
		(5) Madras	194	16	12	41	38	....	107	301	1	76	3	6	....	86	215	230	213	289	2·81	2·07	1 40	1·03
		Total	29,061	2,054	1,710	10,811	5,262	384	20,221	49,282	1 132	13,057	1,332	1,173	....	16 694	32,588	31,767	31,129	47,572	3 76	2 46	4·27	2 79
		Total Adults	63,813	4,827	3,916	23,817	11,856	855	45,271	109,084	2,378	28,819	3,561	2 676	....	37,434	71,650	70,676	68,713	105 168	3·89	2 54	5 18	3 ·8
Minors under 16½ years, excluding infants under 2 years.	Boys	.....	15,989	4,631	475	1,395	2,513	1,380	10,394	26,383	348	3,329	583	874	471	5,605	20,778	19 708	18,825	25 908	4 64	3 37	3 09	2 25
	Girls	.....	11,865	3,668	382	1,009	2,023	1,413	8,495	20 360	319	2,764	372	699	384	4,538	15,822	15 066	14,258	19,978	4 90	3 86	2 60	1·84
		Total	27,854	8,299	857	2,404	4,536	2,793	18,889	46,743	667	6,093	955	1,573	855	10,143	36,600	34,794	33,083	45,886	4 75	3 42	2 88	2·08
		Grand Total	91,667	13,126	4,773	26,221	16,392	3,648	64,160	155,827	3,045	34,912	4,516	4,249	855	47,577	108,250	105,470	101,796	151,054	4·17	2 81	4 43	2·98

* The entries in column 4 do not tally with the figures entered in column 18 of the return for the previous year. The returns from some tea-gardens in Sylhet employing only non-Act coolies which were received last year have not been received this year, hence the discrepancy.

DIVISIONAL RETURN NO. 26 OF 1878.

PART 1A.—*Return showing separately the Statistics of* (1) *Dependents of Act-VII. Labourers,* (2) *Free Immigrants under three years' residence, and* (3) *Immigrants over three years' residence employed in the Province of Assam during the year* 1878.

Age.	Sex.	Locality of Birthplace.	Remaining at the commencement of the year 1878.				Additions made during the year 1878.				Total coolies employed (total of columns 7 and 11).	Deductions made during the year 1878.												Total coolies deducted (total of columns 16, 20, and 24).
												Deaths				Desertions.				Otherwise deducted.				
			Dependents of Act-VII. labourers.	Free immigrants under three years' residence.	Immigrants over three years' residence.	Total of columns 4, 5, and 6.	Dependents of Act-VII labourers.	Free immigrants under three years' residence.	Immigrants over three years' residence.	Total of columns 8, 9, and 10.		Dependents of Act VII. labourers.	Free immigrants under three years' residence.	Immigrants over three years' residence.	Total of columns 13, 14, and 15.	Dependents of Act-VII labourers.	Free immigrants under three years residence	Immigrants over three years' residence.	Total of columns 17, 18, and 19.	Dependents of Act-VII labourers	Free immigrants under three years residence	Immigrants over three years' residence	Total of columns 21, 22, and 23.	
1	2	3	4	5*	6	7†	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Adults	Men	Bengal	846	1,128	12,284	14,258	604	1,811	6,636	9,051	23,309	50	66	301	417	68	159	401	628	323	891	4,958	6,172	7,217
		N W Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	755	1,631	6,879	9,265	491	2,061	4,984	7,536	16,801	67	123	369	559	104	345	599	1,048	502	1,028	4,194	5,724	7,331
		Chota-Nagpur and Sonthalia	914	942	9,050	10,906	1,213	1,362	5,577	8,212	19,118	57	43	417	517	72	101	348	521	755	324	3,841	4,920	5,958
		Nepal	....	2	39	41	....	6	30	36	77	....	....	....	....	....	1	8	9	....	5	25	30	39
		Madras	10	26	252	282	22	37	156	215	497	5	3	2	10	3	....	20	23	1	7	154	162	195
		Total	2,525	3,723	28,504	34,752	2,390	5,277	17,382	25,060	59,802	179	235	1,089	1,503	247	606	1,376	2,229	1,581	2,255	13,172	17,008	20,740
	Women	Bengal	687	1,042	11,307	13,036	637	1,161	5,953	7,751	20,787	19	35	314	368	56	111	351	518	487	570	4,760	5,817	6,703
		N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	567	1,107	5,068	6,742	301	1,283	3,371	4,955	11,697	37	71	241	349	37	122	341	500	580	525	3,006	4,118	4,962
		Chota-Nagpur and Sonthalia	685	656	7,733	9,074	904	880	5,618	7,402	16,476	62	24	364	450	41	33	235	309	311	252	3,612	4,175	4,934
		Nepal	....	....	15	15	....	2	4	6	21	....	....	....	....	....	2	....	2	....	....	7	7	9
		Madras	3	14	177	194	16	13	78	107	301	....	4	2	6	1	....	2	3	....	2	75	77	86
		Total	1,942	2,819	24,300	29,061	1,858	3,339	15,024	20,221	49,282	118	134	921	1,173	135	268	929	1,332	1,378	1,349	11,462	14,189	16,694
		Grand Total	4,467	6,542	52,804	63,813	4,248	8,616	32,407	45,271	109,084	297	369	2,010	2,676	382	874	2,305	3,561	2,959	3,604	24,634	31,197	37,434

* The figures in columns 5 and 6 agree in most cases with the figures in columns 27 and 28 of this return for the previous year, as the immigrants who attained three years' residence at the end of the previous year were transferred from column 27 to column 28 of the Return 26 for 1877.

† See remarks under column 4, Return 26.

DIVISIONAL RETURN No. 26 OF 1878.—(*Continued*).

Age.	Sex.	Locality of Birthplace.	Remaining at the end of the year 1878.				Death-rate.				Desertion-rate.				Average number—the average of the number of immigrants employed at the beginning and end of the year.			
			Dependents of Act-VII. labourers.	Free immigrants under three years' residence.	Immigrants over three years' residence.	Total of columns 26, 27, and 28.	Dependents of Act-VII. labourers.	Free immigrants under three years residence.	Immigrants over three years' residence.	Total death-rate.	Dependents of Act-VII. labourers.	Free immigrants under three years' residence.	Immigrants over three years' residence.	Total desertion-rate.	Dependents of Act-VII. labourers.	Free immigrants under three years' residence.	Immigrants over three years' residence.	Total average strength.
			26	27*	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
Adults	Men	Bengal	1,009	1,415	13,668	16,092	5·39	5·19	2·31	2·74	7·33	12·50	3·09	4·23	927	1,271	12,976	15,175
		N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	573	2,182	6,715	9,470	10·09	6·45	5·42	5·96	15·66	18·10	8·81	11·18	664	1,906	6,797	9,367
		Chota-Nagpur and Sonthalia	1,303	1,690	10,167	13,160	5·14	3·26	4·34	4·29	6·49	7·67	3·62	4·32	1,108	1,316	9,608	12,033
		Nepal	.....	1	37	38	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	100·00	21·05	25·07	.....	1	38	39
		Madras	23	44	235	302	31·25	9·37	0·82	3·42	18·75	.....	8·23	7·87	16	32	243	292
		Total	2,908	5,332	30,822	39,062	6·59	5·19	3·67	4·07	9·09	13·38	4·63	6·03	2,716	4,527	29,663	36,907
	Women	Bengal	762	1,424	11,898	14,084	2·62	2·83	2·70	2·71	7·73	9·00	3·02	3·08	724	1,233	11,602	13,560
		N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	214	1,662	4,859	6,735	9·48	5·13	4·85	5·17	9·48	8·81	6·87	7·42	390	1,384	4,963	6,738
		Chota-Nagpur and Sonthalia	1,175	1,207	9,160	11,542	6·66	2·57	4·30	4·36	4·40	3·54	2·78	2·99	930	931	8,446	10,308
		Nepal	.....	.....	12	12	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	15·38	.....	.....	13	13
		Madras	18	12	185	215	.....	30·76	1·10	2·94	10·00	.....	1·10	1·47	10	13	181	204
		Total	2,169	4,305	26,114	32,588	5·74	3·76	3·65	3·80	6·56	7·52	3·68	4·32	2,055	3,562	25,207	30,824
		*Grand Total	5,077	9,637	56,936	71,650	6·22	4·56	3·66	3·95	8·00	10·80	4·20	5·25	4,772	8,089	54,870	67,731

* Persons who attained three years' residence at the end of the year were transferred to column 28.